



# News Release

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## *Share of Connecticut Residents without Health Insurance Increased in 2017 while Incomes Remained Stagnant*

NEW HAVEN – An estimated 21,000 more state residents lacked health insurance coverage in 2017 compared to the previous year, according to a new report from Connecticut Voices for Children analyzing newly released American Community Survey data. Connecticut’s long-term economic prosperity depends on ensuring economic opportunity for all children and families. The report, however, indicates that Connecticut’s families saw their incomes stagnate in 2017 as economic disparities persist in the state, with wide racial disparities in household income and poverty rates.

Health insurance losses in Connecticut are the result of policy changes in the HUSKY A program (Medicaid for children, parents, and pregnant women). Legislators lowered income eligibility limits for the program in 2015, pushing 11,000 parents off HUSKY A in 2016. The uninsured rate, as a result, increased by 0.6 percentage points. “Families need to have access to affordable medical care to thrive and stay healthy,” says Karen Siegel, Health Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children. “Research shows that when an adult loses health insurance coverage, children in the household are less likely to remain insured, even if they are eligible.”

New data highlight that the economic outlook of Connecticut’s families has not improved. Median household income remained flat between 2016 and 2017 in the state. Despite shrinking unemployment, poverty and child poverty rates did not decline significantly in Connecticut between 2016 and 2017, in contrast to the rest of the country.

People of color continue to face disproportionate barriers to economic security, earning less than two-thirds of White households. Black Connecticut residents are more than twice as likely to experience poverty compared to White residents. Latino residents are over three times as likely as White residents to experience poverty.

“We need to pass common-sense public policies that remove barriers to families’ health and economic security,” says Rachel Silbermann, Fiscal Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children. The report encourages lawmakers to implement policies geared towards promoting economic security. These include raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020, which would increase incomes for more than 524,000 Connecticut residents; and restoring the state Earned Income Tax Credit to 30 percent of the federal level, which would help more than 200,000 households currently earning less than \$20,000 a year. In addition, Connecticut Voices for Children calls for the implementation of paid family leave in the state, a policy that would provide significant support to working parents with positive long-term impacts on the health and wellbeing of both children and parents.

*About Connecticut Voices for Children: Connecticut Voices for Children is a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential. In furtherance of its mission, Connecticut Voices for Children produces high-quality research and analysis, promotes citizen education, advocates for policy change at the state and local level, and works to develop the next generation of leaders.*