



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

January 10, 2025

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-34
Health and Human Services, Care For Kids Program (\$332,000)

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #25-34 Department of Health and Human Services, Care For Kids Program is likely to advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County by helping to reduce racial disparities in health insurance coverage among children in the County, particularly for those who are ineligible for other state and federal programs.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #25-34 Department of Health and Human Services, Care For Kids Program is to allocate \$332,000 in General Fund Reserves to the Department of Health and Human Services for The Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc. (PCC) and projected shortfalls in the Care for Kids program. The program estimates the shortfall to begin as early as December for specialty dental care, January for Behavioral Health Services, March for Primary Care, and April for Pharmacy services. The additional funding will help prevent impacts on patients, poorer health outcomes and service disruptions.

The Care for Kids Program provides access to health care services for uninsured children in Montgomery County. Care is available at nine community-based providers and sixteen

school-based health and wellness centers¹. Children who are eligible² for the program are uninsured and not eligible for The Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP) or MCHP Premium program; Montgomery County residents; between the ages of newborn and 19; and have a family income of no greater than 250% the federal poverty level (for a family of four in 2024³, 250% of the federal poverty level would be a household income of \$78,000). For context, in 2024 the Area Median Income in Montgomery County was \$154,700⁴. In 2023, there were a total of 11,093 uninsured children, representing 4.4% of children in Montgomery County according to US Census data provided by the Maryland Center on Economic Policy to Kids Count Data Center⁵. This number has risen by more than 2,500 children since 2018⁶. Enrollment in the Care for Kids program is expected to be more than 12,000 children in 2025⁷.

III. **ANALYSIS:** ORESJ has conducted numerous REIAs covering systemic health inequities, including barriers to health insurance coverage, and their impact on racial disparities in access to healthcare and health outcomes in the County. The following two REIAs focus on the impact these disparities on children, in particular children who are uninsured and the barriers they and their families face in accessing health insurance coverage and healthcare:

- #23-68 – Amendment to the FY23 Operating Budget for Maryland School-Based Health Center Program
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/23-68.pdf>
- Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation #22-49 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement Cooperative Agreement <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/22-49.pdf>

To supplement the analysis in these two REIAs, ORESJ has provided the following graph which shows the percent of each group of children under 19, in Montgomery County, who did not have health insurance in 2023:

¹ Department of Health and Human Services. “Medical Care for Uninsured Children (Care For Kids)”. Available at: [Montgomery County Maryland](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/PHSMedCareforUninsChildrenCareForKids-P1703.html#Eligibility)

² Department of Health and Human Services. “Medical Care for Uninsured Children (Care For Kids): Eligibility”. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/PHS/PHSMedCareforUninsChildrenCareForKids-P1703.html#Eligibility>

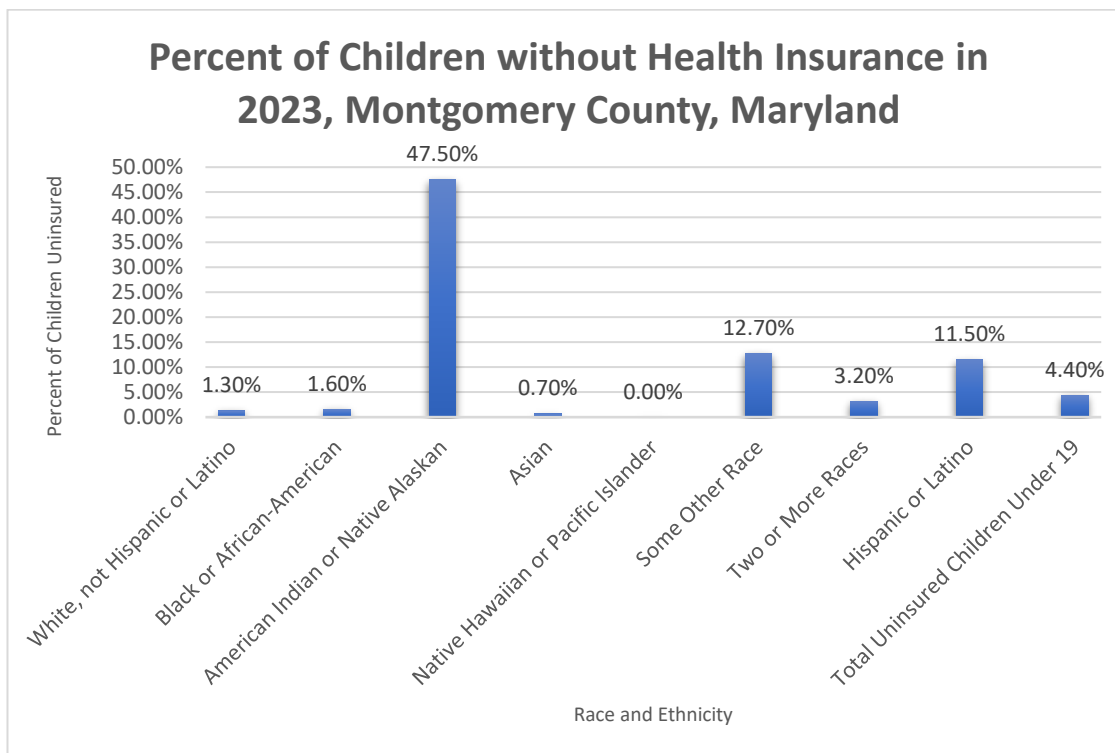
³ Healthcare.gov. Federal Poverty Level. Available at: <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>

⁴ Montgomery County DHCA –2024 Rent and Income Limits. Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/Resources/Files/housing/multifamily/MC2024Income_RentLimits.pdf

⁵ Annie E. Casey Foundation and Kids Count Data Center. “Selected Kids Count Indicators for Montgomery County in Maryland”. Available at: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/customreports/3315/10246>

⁶ Ibid. <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/customreports/3315/10246>

⁷ Memo from Marc Elrich, County Executive and Richard S. Madaleno, Chief Administrative Officer to Andrew Friedson, President, Montgomery County Council on November 8, 2024.



Source: Author’s duplication of data from The Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center. Data Provided by Maryland Center on Economic Policy. Available at: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/customreports/3315/10246>

The data shows that larger percentages of American Indian or Native Alaskan children (47.5%), Hispanic or Latino children (11.5%), and Children of Some Other Race (12.7%) do not have health insurance compared to the overall percentage of children (4.4%) who do not have health insurance in Montgomery County. The Care for Kids program, based on its eligibility criteria (and the eligibility criteria for Medicaid and MCHP), is a critical safety net program and is designed to help reduce racial disparities in childhood health insurance coverage. DHHS provided the following rationale for funding to avoid disruptions to the Care for Kids program: *“This appropriation...addresses health disparities and access to care for one of our most vulnerable populations. If the supplemental is not granted, it will cause a burden to our most vulnerable populations who are disproportionately members of racial and ethnic minority groups.”*⁸

It is clear based on our previous research and updated disaggregated data on childhood health insurance coverage that funding for the Care for Kids Program will help advance racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County by targeting resources towards children who are disproportionately impacted by a lack of access to health insurance coverage and healthcare services.

⁸ Information provided by DHHS in the RESJ Template submitted with this Supplemental Appropriation request.

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-34 Department
of Health and Human Services Care For Kids Program

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cc: Dr. James C. Bridgers, Jr., Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Tricia Swanson, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive