



Families living with health insurance, and without: New storybook highlights why all Utah children need health insurance

Throughout the pandemic, health insurance has been a critical lifeline for Utah families to stay healthy and avoid medical debt. Yet many Utah children and parents are still unable to access any form of health insurance; they are denied coverage due to their immigration status. A new digital storybook, released by Voices for Utah Children, highlights families' real-life experiences with health insurance and medical care. The stories reveal how having health insurance- or not having it- can alter a child's life course.

The digital book is a collection of accounts shared by children, parents and caregivers across Utah. To protect the privacy and sensitive material shared, names were changed. The book includes accounts of children growing up without health insurance; the short and long-term positive impact of CHIP and Medicaid for children; immigrants and asylees finding the care they need; and children being denied care due to immigration status, while their siblings born in the United States can access care.

100% Kids Coverage Storybook

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The storybook humanizes a problem that is often ignored: today in Utah, thousands of Utah children are still shut out of health coverage. As one DACA-recipient recounts in the book, growing up her families was “Too scared of the cost to go to the ER.”

However, there are glimpses of hope on the horizon. In the 2022 General Session, the Utah Legislature [considered a bill](#) that would allow all income-eligible children to enroll in Medicaid or CHIP, regardless of their background or immigration status. The bill, sponsored by Senator Luz Escamilla and Representative Mike Schultz, passed the Senate with broad support, but ran out of time in the House.

The book lifts up the stories behind the 2022 legislation. Previous reports from Voices for Utah Children have estimated the [significant state savings if all children have coverage](#). The digital storybook shows the emotional, physical and financial costs families pay when their children are denied health insurance, and the life-changing benefits when families are able to get coverage.

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