

Immigrant Families On Access To Health Care

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Written by: Ciriac Alvarez Valle



Immigrant Families on Health Coverage

Thanks to Centro de la Family, the Consulate of Mexico in Salt Lake, Holy Cross Ministries, and Utah Health Policy Project, we were able to survey 34 immigrant families about health care, access to health insurance, what having health insurance or not has meant for them.

The immigrant families surveyed range in location and statuses many families live in mixed immigration statuses from undocumented, legal permanent residents, and U.S. citizens.

From all the surveys, one thing was clear: having access to quality health insurance such as CHIP or Medicaid has made a difference for these families in terms of health, overall wellbeing, and financial security.

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"It has meant a lot especially because I have a son with disabilities and a lot of doctor's appointments."

"[Medicaid/CHIP] is great, it has made us feel like my children are protected."

"It brings me peace to know that when my children need medical attention or have an emergency, I have place to take them without being overwhelmed by billing"

"My children have health insurance and I feel good with it because whatever happens I can take them to the doctors."

These quotes were taken directly from mothers who took the survey and were able to take their children to receive the necessary wellness checks throughout the year for their children and felt the safety net that CHIP and Medicaid provided. This safety net has allowed these families to spend less on health care, access the services they need, and not feel overwhelmed by the health care system. Many of them talked about a feeling of "tranquility" from having access to

For the families that were unable to have access to health insurance the amounts they owed ranged from owing \$300-\$5,000 in medical bills. 6 families reported their sick children got other family members or other classmates sick, 5 said they caused absences in school, and 4 of them also said an adult at home missed days of work and had to stay home.

One mother said, *"Having health insurance for my children has been of great importance to me, I have felt happy to have their physical checks done and my children are very healthy."*

Another mother said, *"It helped us during the time that my husband was unable to work, and we had low resources, mi children went to the emergency room and were able to get treatment."*

One mother also talked about the benefits of having health insurance meant her family and her were able to understand the benefits that are much greater than spending less on health care: *"I learned that having regular physical and dental check ups that are covered by Medicaid you can reduce the risk of developing serious illnesses and that has helped my family and children a lot."*

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Overall the theme remained the same, having health insurance such as Medicaid and CHIP provided relief for all the families that were surveyed. Each of them had different concerns but most of their main concerns were the wellbeing of their children and having the means to pay for their wellness checks. While there is still a climate of fear that surrounds immigrant families, they all had an understanding of the importance of health care and health coverage. Thanks to these vital programs, families can move forward, take care of their medical needs, and take care of their families. With our 100% Kids Coverage Campaign we are hoping to improve coverage and care for all families in Utah! If you would like more information about our campaign, please [click here](#) or email ciriac@utahchildren.org!

Together we can work towards [100% Kids Covered in Utah](#)!