



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **EVENTS HELP BUSINESS OWNERS AND OTHERS IDENTIFY HEALTH COVERAGE OPTIONS DURING COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK**

*Hundreds of events planned by 'Health Access America' to enroll  
uninsured kids in available coverage programs*

Washington, DC – A new health coverage initiative, *Health Access America*, will hold hundreds of events in communities across the country in the coming days as part of *Cover the Uninsured Week* (April 23-29), the largest, nonpartisan mobilization in history seeking solutions for the nearly 45 million Americans who are uninsured.

*Health Access America* organizers are planning more than 300 events during the next three weeks, from a breakfast discussion aimed at helping small business owners in Columbia, SC, learn about coverage options for their employees, to a 'Mom's Brunch and Lunch' hosted at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo to help moms discover insurance options for themselves and their children.

"While a long-term solution for America's uninsured is desperately needed, much can be done in the short-term to help uninsured people who may have available options, but may not know about them," said Mary R. Grealy, president of the Healthcare Leadership Council, which is spearheading the *Health Access America* events. "This is especially true for uninsured kids, many of whom are eligible for public coverage programs or assistance in acquiring affordable private coverage. Every family needs health insurance, and employers and their employees need to know the facts about what's available to them."

*Health Access America* plans activities to educate people about coverage options in communities across the nation. The initiatives focus on four key groups: children under age 18; small business owners who may be struggling to find affordable coverage for their employees and themselves; young adults who may have recently graduated from high school or college and are working in their first jobs, but do not have health insurance; and Hispanics, who are more likely to be without health coverage than other racial and ethnic groups.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 45 million Americans have no health insurance, including about 9 million children.

This year, *Cover the Uninsured Week* comes at a critical time, with Congress working to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Enacted in 1997, SCHIP provides each state with federal funds for a health insurance program for vulnerable children. Organizers of the *Week* say that if America's leaders fail to renew and sufficiently fund SCHIP, millions of children who desperately need health insurance will remain uninsured and without adequate health care.



“Each year more children from hard-working, middle-class families find themselves without health coverage, either because their parents’ employers don’t offer coverage or because their family is unable to afford insurance,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which sponsors *Cover the Uninsured Week*. “It’s essential that we do everything we can to help America’s families discover their options for low-cost or free health insurance. Healthy kids are vital for a strong America.”

Thousands of people will participate in *Health Access America* and other *Cover the Uninsured Week* events April 23-29 in thousands of community service and education events being held in every state. Other planned activities include SCHIP enrollment events, town hall discussions, campus activities and faith-based events. Now in its fifth year, *Cover the Uninsured Week* brings together business owners, union members, educators, students, patients, physicians, nurses, faith leaders and their congregants, and organizations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to demand that our nation's leaders find solutions for the nearly 45 million Americans living without health insurance.

In addition to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Healthcare Leadership Council, organizations sponsoring *Cover the Uninsured Week* include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, AARP, United Way of America, American Medical Association, National Medical Association, American Nurses Association, Families USA, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, America’s Health Insurance Plans, American Hospital Association, Federation of American Hospitals, Catholic Health Association of the United States, Service Employees International Union, National Alliance for Hispanic Health, The California Endowment and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

To locate events being held across America, discover ways to get involved, learn more about SCHIP or read about the issue, log on to [www.CoverTheUninsured.org](http://www.CoverTheUninsured.org).

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*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).*

*The Healthcare Leadership Council is a coalition of chief executives from the nation's major health care companies and organizations, sharing a common vision of a 21st century health care system that is accessible, affordable and of the highest quality. More information is available at [www.hlc.org](http://www.hlc.org).*