



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **New Study of Children's Health Initiatives Show Across-the-Board Health Gains in Kids**

*Children in Three Diverse Counties Proven to be Healthier; Parent Confidence Soars*

Los Angeles, Calif. – New data released today showed that Healthy Kids, a locally-funded health insurance program for children, found consistent and dramatic gains in the well-being of children and families across three diverse counties and populations in California. Among the findings, the proportion of children having a usual source of care was significantly higher in Healthy Kids, reaching about 90 percent in each county.

The evaluations, conducted by the Mathematica Policy Institute, the Urban Institute and the University of California, San Francisco covers findings regarding the Healthy Kids component of Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs) in three counties: Los Angeles, San Mateo and Santa Clara. The study focused on children ages zero to five in Los Angeles County, and zero to 18 in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The policy brief was funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

“This comprehensive study demonstrates that the Healthy Kids program can serve as a reliable model for effective health insurance coverage throughout California and beyond,” said Chris Trenholm, Associate Director of Research at Mathematica Policy Research, lead evaluator on the Santa Clara Findings, and author of the policy brief containing the findings.

The brief compiled data from newly-released evaluations of Healthy Kids and compared the results with previously released evaluations. The stunning success of Healthy Kids found in Santa Clara County is consistent with results in San Mateo and Los Angeles. The following is a summary of the main findings of the report:

#### **Access to Health Care Improves:**

- The proportion of children having a usual source of care rose significantly, reaching about 90 percent in each county.
- Santa Clara County had a 45% increase while San Mateo County enjoyed a 36% increase. The increase in Los Angeles County was more than 16%.
- The proportion of children having a medical visit in the past six months rose in all three counties, with substantial gains in **Santa Clara** (41% increase) and **San Mateo** (29% increase), respectively.

#### **Unmet Health Care Needs Decline:**

- Santa Clara County had a 45% increase while San Mateo County enjoyed a 36% increase.
- The proportion of children having a medical visit in the past six months rose in all three counties, with substantial gains in Santa Clara (41% increase) and San Mateo (29% increase), respectively.

### **Parent Confidence Soars:**

- The proportion of parents who reported being “very confident” that their children could obtain needed care rose sharply in all three counties.
  - In **Los Angeles**, parent confidence **nearly doubled**, rising from 28% to 55%.
  - In **Santa Clara**, parent confidence rose 45%.
  - In **San Mateo**, parent confidence rose 36%.

“These latest findings confirm what the Children’s Health Initiatives have long known, that our work is making a noticeable difference in the lives of the children and families we serve,” said Debra Ward, Project Lead for California’s Children’s Health Initiatives, which counts Santa Clara, San Mateo and Los Angeles Counties among its membership. “Unfortunately, these very programs that have proven to be so successful are at risk financially because demand for services has outpaced supply. That’s why it is so important for our elected officials in Sacramento to enact policy and funding that includes coverage for California kids in 2008,” added Ward.

Los Angeles, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties are part of the California Children’s Health Initiatives, a collaboration of 32 counties working to expand access to affordable health insurance to all children in California. Healthy Kids programs similar to those evaluated in the study are offered in 25 of the 32 counties.

Collectively, the Healthy Kids programs have helped provide comprehensive health care coverage to more than 85,000 kids in California. Moreover, children enrolled in Healthy Kids are ones who would otherwise lack access to state-funded programs such as Medi-Cal and Healthy Families due to income or immigration status. Prior to enrolling in Healthy Kids, the vast majority of these children had no health insurance coverage for basic health care and many of these children *never* had health insurance coverage for these services, placing them at long-term risk for poor health care access and limited use of preventive care.

“We posed the question – if you provide insurance coverage for kids who are ineligible for existing public health programs and keep them enrolled, can you have an impact on the kids and the health care system? The answer is yes,” said Dr. Gene Lewit, Senior Program Manager, Children, Families and Communities Program of the Packard Foundation. “Santa Clara, San Mateo and Los Angeles Counties have built a remarkable model for how kids can be covered and transformed how California and the nation think about covering all kids.”

### **About the California Children’s Health Initiatives (CCHI):**

The California Children’s Health Initiatives (CCHI) is a collaboration of 32 local Children’s Health Initiatives (CHIs) dedicated to ensuring that all California children have access to quality health coverage. Together, the CHIs emphasize streamlined enrollment into Healthy Families, Medi-Cal and Healthy Kids insurance programs, and share a goal of creating and maintaining a sustainable health care program for all children in California.