

INNOVATIONS

Access to Healthcare: United Way's Healthy Families for Florida's Future

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United Way: Goals for the Common Good

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United Way provides financial and social support through identifying and building on community strengths and assets. The United Way impacts the lives of millions each year through helping individuals and groups, with specific community interests, find ways to contribute their time and talents, support service programs and community-change efforts. All of this is done in collaboration with diverse partners. Depending on the issue and how the community chooses to address it, United Ways across the country work with schools, government agencies, businesses, organized labor, financial institutions, community development corporations, voluntary and neighborhood associations, and the faith-based community.

In 2008, United Way set "bold" national "*Common Good*" goals for its organization: work to boost youth graduating from high school, improve working families' financial stability, and keep Americans healthy (UW, 2015).



United Way views these targets as the "building blocks for a good life", which can only be achieved through collaboration and partnership across all sectors within each community. One of the *Common Good* targets, improving the health of people, is to decrease "the percentage of children under the age of 18 who are not covered by health care insurance" (UW, 2015). There are 445,035 uninsured children living in Florida. This is 8.5% of the total uninsured child population in the nation (Georgetown, 2014). The enormity of uninsured children across the state makes outreach to enroll children into Florida KidCare, the state's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), vital.

The mission of the United Way is to improve lives by "mobilizing the caring power of communities" to advance *Common Good*. This is why the United Way has become an integral partner in CHIP outreach. Common good cannot be achieved through working alone (UW, 2015). Collaboration between United Way organizations and CHIP outreach and enrollment efforts can bridge a gap in connecting uninsured children with health care coverage. The value of working with the United Way is a shared belief in every community being healthy.

Partnerships with United Ways are taking shape across Florida, focusing on the *Common Good* to ensure all eligible children have access to affordable health care coverage. Ted Granger, President of the United Way of Florida states, "the health and well-being of Florida's children is a United Way priority, and Florida KidCare is the best - and only - way hundreds of thousands of children can receive the healthcare they need. United Way partnerships with Florida KidCare help to ensure that as many children as possible receive preventative care, and care when they are sick. As a result, communities and taxpayers reap huge dividends through, among others, fewer costly emergency room visits, better education outcomes, and workers who are focused on their jobs, not on their sick children who are not getting the healthcare they need."

Florida United Ways' Community Impact

The United Way's national goals for the *Common Good* initiative seek to ensure "children and youth receive timely, regular preventative health care" (UWA, 2008). To address this goal in Florida, United Ways utilize an "initiative-based community impact model" to connect children to affordable and accessible health care coverage. This model takes a specific issue within a community and focuses resources and efforts to address the problem through collaborating with other organizations and funders. Florida's United Way organizations use the community impact model to help determine which projects to fund and support based on their demonstration that the program can "create lasting changes in community conditions" (UWA, n.d.).

The core mission for this model is to address the root causes of community problems in order to bring community-level changes. The model creates strategic partnerships that focus on the community conditions that must change in order to create long-term improvements. Within her research, "United Way, Healthy Communities, and Collective Impact", Stacey Stewart (2014) found the United Way's utilization of the community impact model has been mobilizing communities to create diverse partnerships, focused on a common goal. Particularly, Stewart found through participating in cross-sector coalitions, including businesses, faith, and community-based organizations, and "emphasising on starting early to help kids come to school healthy...more kids are getting preventive health services" (p. 77). This is an added value to working with United Ways throughout the state to coordinate collaborations at a local level to promote enrollment into Florida KidCare. As a result, Florida KidCare outreach efforts conducted by United Ways across the state have expanded application assistance sites to include organizations and small businesses, created 2-1-1 referral services for Florida KidCare application assistance, and enhanced local Florida KidCare coalition efforts.

"Uninsured children tend to come from low-income, working families that are trying to make ends meet." -Keith Heinly

United Ways Taking the Lead in Florida KidCare Outreach

Keith Heinly, Community Impact Manager with the United Way of Brevard (UWB), explains that within Brevard County, "uninsured children tend to come from low-income, working families that are trying to make ends meet." The American Academy of Pediatrics has reported that there needs to be "a better job of spreading the word among families that these programs [children's health insurance programs and children's Medicaid] are available." To address this need, the UWB implemented the UWB County's Florida KidCare Outreach project with "Kids Oughta Be Covered" funding from the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation. UWB's Florida KidCare Outreach project originated out of valuable relationships between the UWB and community agencies, organizations that enabled the UWB to train professionals to reach uninsured children and their families facing language, literacy, and cultural barriers to help them enroll and renew coverage for their children.



Keith Heinly, United Way Brevard, Manager, Community Impact, Florida KidCare Outreach Supervisor

The UWB's Florida KidCare Outreach staff and volunteers have weekly schedules to provide Florida KidCare application assistance at targeted locations throughout the county. Each Florida KidCare application assistance site includes a certified assistor with a laptop securely connected to the internet and a scanner to upload any verification documentation for families applying for Florida KidCare online. The UWB's Florida KidCare Outreach Project has established education and enrollment opportunities at local churches that serve African-American and Hispanic families, union organizations that primarily serve the Haitian families in Brevard, and at community centers serving additional diverse communities. The project has provided training and Florida KidCare outreach materials for local hospitals and emergency rooms, pregnancy resources, women and children's health organizations, and women and children's emergency/transitional shelters. Since the project's launch on July 1, 2014, 50 individuals have been trained to provide application assistance, over 75 community enrollment events have been held, and Florida KidCare application assistance for families is being provided throughout the community.

United Ways Taking the Lead continued...

Broward County United Way

The United Way of Broward County funds a specifically-targeted Florida KidCare outreach project with the Broward County Health Department (BCDOH). The United Way-funded Florida KidCare outreach grant works directly within the most vulnerable Hispanic community in Broward County that has the highest rates of uninsured children. This outreach project's goal provides mobile application and enrollment assistance through establishing community partnerships with libraries, faith-based organizations, parks, preschools, grocery stores, and small businesses. The unique factor to this outreach project is that BCDOH proposed the use of the Promotores de Salud model for health workers as the staffing model for the project and the United Way embraced the concept as a best practice. Since the project began in January 2015, BCDOH has hired a community member that received Florida KidCare application assistance training and certification and provides Florida KidCare application assistance along with coverage to care resources within Broward County.

United Way of Hernando County

The United Way of Hernando County (UWHC) does not have grant-funded Florida KidCare outreach, yet for years the UWHC has asked local partners to become certified application assistants to help residents applying for Florida KidCare. Head Start-Mid Florida Community Services; Hernando County Public Library; Mid Florida Community Services; A New Generation; Pine Grove Elementary; and 11 Title 1 School Family Centers currently provide application assistance for UWHC. Additionally, UWHC has connected their application assistance sites to 2-1-1. Through this partnership, 2-1-1 lists application assistance sites by their geographic location within the county, making it simple for families seeking assistance to find accessible help close to their home or employment. Tina Kirkpatrick, UWHC's Financial Director says, "providing assistance to families, especially helping families keep kids healthy defines the United Way mission."

An Effective Partnership: United Way & Florida KidCare Outreach Projects

The United Way's connection to Florida KidCare goes beyond United Way organizations across Florida connecting kids to coverage by offering application assistance. United Ways have become an essential partner for Florida KidCare outreach projects throughout the state. Whether the United Ways are assisting with back-to-school Florida KidCare promotions or providing local Florida KidCare coalitions with meeting space and offering pro-bono fiscal agent assistance, they are central in establishing community collaborations that connect kids to health care coverage.

Golisano Children's Hospital's (GCH) Florida KidCare Outreach

Golisano Children's Hospital's (GCH) Florida KidCare outreach project collaborates with the United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades, and Okeechobee Counties' human resources (HR) department. The United Way's employer-sponsored health care coverage for families with children doubled in cost from 2013 to 2014. This United Way reached out to GCH to assist employees looking for health care coverage options outside of their employer-sponsored coverage. While most United Way employees complete the applications themselves, GCH's Florida KidCare outreach project has also trained the United Way HR staff on how to complete the application and assist families with following up on their applications to ensure enrollment. Kim Samuelson, Supervisor for Florida KidCare Outreach at GCH, says, "it is important to have relationships with individuals within the United Way, they help to identify how your program can fit into the United Way." Kim had a relationship with United Way's Director of Community Planning and is on the United Way's Pace Setters Committee for Lee Memorial Health System. "The relationship is intertwined. Our United Way partners and projects are involved with anything to do with families and communities. The partnership is about connections and being involved with the community itself. If you are directly connected with your community, you are going to cross paths with United Way."

The Family Healthcare Foundation

The Family Healthcare Foundation sees its partnership with the United Way Suncoast as a means of future growth to connecting kids to health coverage. Currently this partnership helps connect United Way agencies that have very direct reach into diverse communities to The Family Healthcare Foundation's Florida KidCare enrollment outreach project. Without this partnership, The Family Healthcare Foundation would not be able to reach vulnerable, underserved, and special needs populations. As means of reciprocity and expanding upon this partnership, The Family Healthcare Foundation would like to set up Florida KidCare application assistance trainings specifically for United Way business partner's human resource departments. Melanie Hall, The Family Healthcare Foundation's Executive Director, states, "there is room to grow this relationship with opportunity to train United Way partners. An opportunity through the United Way business partners can lead to partnering with their human resource departments, where Florida KidCare enrollment processes and partnerships can be created. The United Way can be our liaison to the business community that we have never had before. We can help their business partners build a healthier work force so the partnership would be win/win."

Connecting To Your Local United Way

Partnerships with a local United Way can diversify Florida KidCare outreach. The United Way may be a catapult into the community, assisting Florida KidCare projects with making connections that help to overcome the challenges of reaching out to families. Smart practices on how to connect with a local United Way include:



Find a health
champion within your
local United Way

Volunteer-Attend
United Way Events -
Even Fundraisers



Advocate-Know your
local United Way's
advocacy priorities

Set up a meeting with a United Way representative or partner that is a child health advocate. Use this meeting to discuss how Florida KidCare outreach can enhance their *Goals for Common Good* initiative. Attending United Way events can open doors for Florida KidCare outreach efforts to work with the United Way directly and their community partners. United Way's hosts many community events, not just health & wellness fairs; attending these events as a vendor and participating is a great way to get to know your local United Way. Lastly and most importantly, know your local United Way's advocacy priorities and how Florida KidCare outreach can help the United Way educate policy makers and community members on the importance of supporting the availability of Florida KidCare enrollment assistance within their community. United Way is a trusted organization that can provide Florida KidCare outreach partners with systematic community knowledge. Collaborations with the United Way to assist families with uninsured children in receiving health care coverage through Florida KidCare is a promising outreach practice. Invite the United Way to not only partner with, but to take an active leadership role with Florida KidCare outreach.

Credits

Agency for Health Care Administration
Broward County Department of Health
Center for Children and Families at the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute
The Family Healthcare Foundation
Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida
Florida Covering Kids & Families
Lawton & Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers & Babies
National Civic Review
United Way
United Way Brevard County
United Way Florida
USF Health

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