

MEDIA RELEASE

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2010 North Carolina Child Health Report Card: Much Progress, but Concern for the Future

Raleigh, N.C. - The 2010 North Carolina Child Health Report Card, issued jointly by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and Action for Children North Carolina, indicates that the health and safety of the state's children continue to improve, but expresses concerns that progress may be reversed in the coming years.

Highlights from the Report Card include:

- Approximately 22.5 percent of North Carolina's 2.2 million children (ages 0-17) continue to live in poverty, providing a serious challenge to the health of children across the state.
- About 1-in-9 children are still without health insurance. While investments have increased enrollment in public health insurance programs to over one million children, this increase has not been able to keep up with the tremendous losses in employer-based coverage.
- Both the infant death rate and the overall child death rate are at historic lows.
- Homicides, including child abuse homicides, declined significantly, prompting hopes that this is the beginning of a trend, not just a one-year phenomenon.
- For immunization at 19-35 months, North Carolina ranked ninth in the nation in 2009.
- The percentage of children who are obese continues to be a significant problem despite recent efforts to combat this "epidemic". Almost 1-in-4 children (ages 2-18) are obese.
- For the first time, all of the rates regarding teens' use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances improved.

This is the 16th annual Child Health Report Card, which measures progress in 14 areas from 2004-2009. "It is clear that the progress that has been achieved is not happenstance," said Pam Silberman, President of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine. "Continued investments by the General Assembly, the increased use of evidence-based strategies by state and local service providers, and the enhanced involvement of parents have all contributed to making North Carolina a healthier and safer place for children."

"The data in the Report Card reflect outcomes before the full onset of the recession and the dramatic budget reductions that occurred in 2009 and 2010," said Barbara Bradley, President and CEO of Action for Children North Carolina. "As they consider potential budget reductions in 2011, our leaders must keep in mind that the health and safety of our children are already being compromised. Further budget reductions could place children in serious jeopardy."

Both Silberman and Bradley stressed the importance of state leaders setting and maintaining a vision of healthy, safe children in nurturing families to achieve of the goal of making North Carolina the best place to be and raise a child.

Action for Children North Carolina is a leading statewide nonprofit organization based in Raleigh and is the 2008 winner of the N.C. Center for Nonprofits' Nonprofit Sector Stewardship Award. Since its founding in 1983, Action for Children has been the leading voice for North Carolina's children. Action for Children is the KIDS COUNT partner in North Carolina and the state affiliate of the national organization, Voices for America's Children. For more information, visit www.ncchild.org.

The North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) is an independent, quasi-state agency that was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1983 to provide balanced, non-partisan information on issues of relevance to the health of North Carolina's population. The NCIOM convenes task forces of knowledgeable and interested individuals to study complex health issues facing the state in order to develop workable solutions to address these issues. For more information, visit www.nciom.org.

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