



Children's Health Releases 15(th) Edition of Beyond ABC, a Comprehensive Report Assessing the Quality of Life for Children in North Texas

1,033 words
14 November 2017
13:00
Business Wire
BWR
English
(c) 2017 Business Wire. All Rights Reserved.

Six-county report reveals progress and areas of need regarding children's access to health care, behavioral health, nutritious foods, poverty, quality early education and more

DALLAS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--November 14, 2017--

Children's HealthSM today released the 15(th) edition of Beyond ABC: Assessing the Well-Being of Children in North Texas, a 98-page report examining the quality of life for children in Dallas, Collin, Cooke, Denton, Fannin and Grayson counties.

Produced biennially in collaboration with the **Institute for Urban Policy Research** at the University of Texas at Dallas, Beyond ABC is a comprehensive assessment of the four factors -- pediatric health, economic security, safety and education -- that shape children's lives across the region and influence their opportunities for the future.

"The strength of a community can be measured by how well it cares for its youngest and most vulnerable residents," said Christopher J. Durovich, president and CEO of Children's Health. "The insights gleaned from this report emphasize that while we've seen some improvements and successes, much work remains. Armed with this powerful data, we implore everyone to treat our mission--to make life better for children--as a call to action."

Highlights from the 2017 report show:

- Lower rates of uninsured children--but more work is needed
 - Rates of uninsured children in Dallas, Cooke, Fannin and Grayson counties are still twice the national average. More than half a million children in Texas are uninsured overall.
 - The number of children covered by Medicaid has increased. Nearly 50% of children in Dallas County are enrolled in Medicaid.
- High rates of childhood poverty and food insecurity across the region
 - One in 5 children in North Texas lives in poverty. Children living in poverty are seven times more likely to be in poor or fair health.
 - Food insecurity has consistently declined in the region since 2013, but all six counties still exceed the national average. One in 4 children in Dallas, Cooke, Fannin and Grayson counties is considered food insecure.
 - Nearly half a million children in North Texas qualify for free or

reduced-price lunches in school. However, many still miss meals on weekends or during the summer.

-- A steady increase in housing instability among children

-- One in 10 homeless children lives in Texas. Unstable housing and homelessness among youths have long-term impacts that include higher risks of behavioral health problems, criminal behavior and victimization, and poor education outcomes, among others.

-- A persisting need for access to mental and behavioral health services

-- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among children ages 10 to 14 nationally, and youth suicide rates have remained steady across North Texas.

-- An estimated 122,009 children in the region live with an emotional disturbance or disorder (including anxiety, bipolar, conduct, obsessive-compulsive and eating disorders), while nearly 30,000 have a serious emotional disturbance.

-- Texas ranks last in per-capita funding for people with mental illness.

-- North Texas children are still struggling in school

-- Nearly 30,000 North Texas third graders--more than half--are reading below grade level, a powerful predictor of future high school graduation.

-- Cultural competency plays a role; nearly 1 in 3 Dallas County students is an English-language learner (Limited English Proficiency), compared with 1 in 20 in Fannin County.

-- A critical need to improve care for children in the Texas foster care system

-- CPS caseloads in all six counties exceed the national best-practice threshold of 17 cases per worker. Fannin County's average caseload in 2016 was triple the national recommendation at 50.3.

-- North Texas has half as many approved foster homes (1,244) as children needing placements (nearly 3,000). The number of approved foster care homes decreased in Dallas, Denton and Fannin counties, while increasing in Collin, Cooke and Grayson.

As in previous years, the 2017 Beyond ABC report was developed with input from an advisory board comprising representatives from key North Texas community organizations whose work influences pediatric health, economic security, safety and education. The advisory board established the final list of indicators and provided real-world insights, ideas and solutions to provide context around the data in the 2017 report. The research staff at the **Institute for Urban Policy Research** at the University of Texas at Dallas then worked to gather the most consistent recent and historical data available for each of the six counties. For many of the indicators, this data is as recent as 2016.

As the leading pediatric health system in North Texas, Children's Health has produced Beyond ABC since 1996. Whereas previous versions of the report have been published annually and focused on Dallas County and the Northern Corridor in alternating years, the format was updated in 2015 to feature a single report covering six counties in the Children's Health service area: Dallas, Collin, Cooke, Denton, Fannin and Grayson. Beyond ABC is now published every other year in mid-November.

To download the full report or order hard copies, visit www.childrens.com/beyondabc.

About Children's HealthSM

Children's HealthSM is the eighth-largest pediatric health care provider in the nation and the leading pediatric health care system in North Texas, providing a full spectrum of health care services -- from daily wellness and primary care to specialty visits and critical care. Holding eight disease-specific care certifications from The Joint Commission, Children's Health has been consistently named one of the nation's top pediatric providers by U.S. News & World Report. The Children's Health system includes Children's Medical Center Dallas, as well as Children's Medical Center Plano, Our Children's House inpatient rehabilitation hospital, multiple specialty centers, Children's Health Pediatric Group primary care practices, rehabilitation facilities, home health, physician services and the Children's Medical Center Research Institute at UT Southwestern. For more information about Children's Health, visit www.childrens.com.

View source version on businesswire.com: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171114005519/en/>

CONTACT: Children's Health
Brooke Traister, 469-978-9373
brooke.traister@childrens.com

SOURCE: Children's Health
Copyright Business Wire 2017

(END)

Document BWR0000020171114edbe000fm