Helping School Staff Educate Families About Health Insurance

**The Challenge:** Access to health care, especially preventive care, is a major factor in maintaining health, and insurance is a key to that access. However, the health insurance system is constantly changing and often difficult to navigate.

This project sought to determine if Wisconsin’s schools could be an effective way to help children arrive at school healthy and ready to learn, with an emphasis on reducing health disparities among Wisconsin’s most underserved and diverse areas.

**Project Goals:** Covering Kids and Families’ (CKF) goal was to partner with schools and community groups to deepen their joint commitment to ensuring students have health insurance, promoting public health insurance options, helping families navigate the insurance system and having centralized support for school staff. This pilot project also sought to evaluate the program’s sustainability and the potential for implementing it throughout Wisconsin.

CKF worked with two Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs), which use public and private funds to provide resources to school districts in its area of the state: CESA 1 in southeastern Wisconsin and CESA 8 in northeastern Wisconsin.

**Results:** CKF provided school district staff in both CESAs with extensive training and workshops about BadgerCare Plus. The project became even more important for the districts midway through the grant period, when the passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) prompted more questions from the families they serve.

School staff members have expressed a strong desire to learn more about BadgerCare Plus and the new Health Insurance Marketplace through the ACA, and CKF continues to seek and receive funding to provide training to them.

*As a School Social Worker, I rely on the website as a rapid and reliable source for me to use when I have families in my office that need advice – now. I appreciate that the CKF staff have reviewed, updated and ‘translated’ the complex and frequently changing information about BadgerCare Plus, and now the Affordable Care Act, so that I can quickly explain or share it,”* one school social worker wrote in her program evaluation.