

how to tips

“HOW TO” TIPS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

What is the Online Resource Center?

The purpose of the Online Resource Center is to help increase the number of eligible children who are enrolled in no- and low-cost health insurance offered through Medi-Cal, the state's Healthy Families Program or through one of the Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs) offered in 29 counties. These are children from low-income families – generally considered the working poor – who are not eligible for and do not want to go on welfare.

Why promote through parks and recreation agencies?

It's simple. Where there are kids, there are parents or caregivers. Your agency's parks and recreation programs attract children (and their parents/caregivers) from throughout your community. Whether it is baseball, soccer, basketball, swim lessons, crafts classes, before- or after-school programs or dance classes – virtually any city- or county-sponsored recreation program for children – such programs offer a perfect opportunity to reach out to parents of children who may be eligible for no- or low-cost health insurance.

If your city or county is served by a special district that provides park recreation programs, consider collaborating with the district to offer children's health insurance information at district activities in your community.

Key Steps to Follow:



1. Decide what events or programs you wish to use as an outreach tool.

Do you offer a parents' night for your youth sports leagues or for dance class participants? These are ideal opportunities for health insurance providers to talk with the parents or caregivers and offer enrollment assistance.

Does your city or county require kids who participate in publicly sponsored sports programs to have health insurance? Are there kids who cannot participate because their families don't have insurance coverage? If so, consider including health insurance information as part of the sports program registration package. Or consider sponsoring a kids' health insurance information day for parents/caregivers during the first day of the sports activity, when parents/caregivers are present to sign up their kids.

Here are some parks and recreation-related opportunities that might be right for your outreach and enrollment project:

- Instructional sports programs or leagues (baseball, basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, tennis, skiing)
- Tiny tots play programs – swimming, dance, gymnastics
- Before- and/or after-school programs
- Crafts or dance lessons
- Community swimming pools
- Community Fourth of July celebrations
- Community-wide special events
- Health insurance information at the parks and recreation department's registration desk or at common areas of recreation facilities.

2. Involve the health insurance providers in your area in planning and executing your activity.

It is helpful to include representatives from health insurance providers as you pick a date (or dates) for the outreach event. It is important to communicate early with them so that your potential date does not conflict with another event at which they are committed to participate.

If you are in one of the 29 counties that has a Children's Health Initiative (CHI), be sure to include them in the project. CHIs offer affordable health insurance to children who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or Health Families Program. Visit <http://www.cchi4kids.org/localchis.php> to see if a CHI is in your area.

“HOW TO” TIPS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES (Cont.)

Remember, state regulations require you to invite all health plans that serve your community, even though some may decline to participate.

For more information about how to work with health insurance providers, please see “How to Work with Health Plans and CHIs” on the Online Resource Center at www.ca-ilg.org/onlineresourcecenter in the Resources and Tools section.

3. Publicize the event in advance.

If you are having an enrollment event, be sure to publicize it in advance. Consider using posters that can be displayed at community events, classes or meetings. You can hand out flyers to the kids to take home to their parents/caregivers or assign a staff person to distribute a flyer to the parents/caregivers when they come to pick up their kids.

The key is to find a good way to alert the parents/caregivers that the enrollment event will be happening so they can plan to attend. The information provided to parents/caregivers includes guidelines on eligibility and what to bring to start the enrollment process. Sample flyers are available on the Online Resource Center at www.ca-ilg.org/onlineresourcecenter in the Resources and Tools section.

4. Who does the enrolling? When?

The health plans and the CHIs will provide staff who are able (and qualified) to help families through the enrollment process. While enrollment may be completed at the event itself *if* the families know in advance and bring the necessary documentation, in many cases, the actual enrollment will be conducted over a period of days. When planning the event, be sure the health plans and CHIs will have enough staff participating to handle potential enrollees.

5. Don't forget your own full-time and part-time employees.

While your agency's full-time employees may receive health benefits, many part-time employees may not. And, your employees may have family or friends whose children might be eligible for no- or low-cost health insurance for their children. You may want to provide enrollment information to them or invite them (or their friends and family) to enrollment events.

