

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



United Way of Greater Kansas City Investing \$268,000 to Connect Eligible Children and Their Parents to Health Care Coverage

(Greater Kansas City)-----Although Congress recently passed sweeping new health care legislation aimed at reducing the number of uninsured, it will be several years before some provisions of the new legislation take effect. In the meantime, health care and what we can do to help the uninsured remains an area of great concern for many Americans. With the downturn in the economy and rise in unemployment, the number of people without health care insurance here in the metro area has grown to more than 210,000 people.

Research has shown that a significant number of those individuals would qualify for state and federal health care programs, but for one reason or another they haven't applied. United Way of Greater Kansas City (UWGKC) wants to change that and today announced the awarding of \$268,124 in grants for an organized outreach effort aimed at enrolling low-income families and individuals in current publicly-supported health care programs.

UWGKC awarded the health outreach grants to nine local nonprofit agencies including Cabot Westside Health Center, Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Don Bosco Community Center, Guadalupe Center, Health Partnership Clinic of Johnson County, Jewish Vocational Services, Communities Creating Opportunities, reStart, and Mattie Rhodes Center. Many of the agencies plan to reach out and work collaboratively with other community organizations. The targeted outreach effort will focus on enrolling uninsured children, their families and pregnant women in publicly financed health insurance programs. The goal is to make it possible for them to start seeing a doctor and assessing their health on a regular basis so that minor health problems can be treated before they turn into health emergencies.

UWGKC President and CEO Brent Stewart said, "Improving the health of people in our community is one of the goals of United Way of Greater Kansas City's Community Impact Agenda. This outreach and enrollment effort is one of several community change strategies we are pursuing in an effort to address the underlying causes of problems we face in our community. The money we are investing in this effort came from dollars raised during last year's United Way campaign, which UWGKC's board of trustees earmarked for community change strategies such as this."

According to census data, more than 33,600 of the locally uninsured are children and youth under the age of 17. The majority of them live in families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, which would make most of them eligible for publicly-supported health care programs such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The nine nonprofit agencies receiving grants will focus their efforts in Jackson, Clay, Platte and Cass Counties in Missouri, and Johnson County, Kansas. Those are the counties served by UWGKC and where the money being used to fund the special health care outreach effort was raised. Caseworkers will proactively seek the uninsured, physically going into neighborhoods which have high concentrations of low-income residents and walking them through the process of enrolling in the health care programs for which they already qualify.

Stewart said, "The health outreach effort will begin immediately and continue throughout the year. UWGKC is committed to promoting health care coverage for uninsured, low-income residents and we will continue efforts such as this to increase outreach and enrollment through 2012."

For further information, contact:

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