

[print](#)

More Families turning to First Choice Kids for children's health needs

09.21.09 - 04:16 pm

SOUTH CAROLINA – As a nurse in a pediatrician's office, Kym Smith understands the importance of children's healthcare. As a single mother, she also knows how expensive quality healthcare for her two children, Travis, 17, and Katelyn, 13, can be.

“As a single parent, paying for my children's healthcare is not easy,” said Kym. “Even with a full-time job and steady income, the monthly expense for their health insurance is just too high.” Kym took the next step and signed her children up for First Choice Kids, a Select Health of South Carolina health plan for children.

First Choice Kids is one plan offered through the state's Healthy Connections Kids program. The program is administered by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (S.C. DHHS) and provides health insurance for children whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to purchase other forms of health insurance. As a result of the economic downturn, more families are relying on the First Choice Kids program to provide health coverage for their children. Since the program's implementation in May 2008, the First Choice Kids membership has grown to nearly 8,000 and averages a monthly increase of about 6 percent. Even as the First Choice Kids membership continues to grow, there is still an opportunity for more families to benefit from the program.

“As we're out in the community spreading information about First Choice Kids, we're finding that many families don't know that there are free health plans available to help them cover the cost of their children's care,” said J. Michael Jernigan, chief executive officer of Select Health. “Our goal is to educate and encourage them to choose First Choice Kids. The program can be a saving grace for children who need reliable healthcare but whose families simply can't afford it.”

First Choice Kids parent Kym Smith, agrees. “What impressed me the most about First Choice Kids is the way they truly care about the health of my children,” said Kym. “My children can still get well child visits past the age of seven, which is important since my children are in their teens. I've never once had any problem with lack of coverage, and Select Health is always there when I need assistance.”

In addition to well child visits, First Choice Kids offers many other quality benefits like doctor and hospital visits, immunizations, emergency services, and vision care.

“Moving to First Choice Kids was the best decision I've made,” said Kym. “I encourage others to make the same choice.”

For more information about Healthy Connections Kids, families may log onto www.scchoices.com.