

JAPAN
HEADS
TO THE
MOON

TIME FOR KIDS

Dr. Alan Shapiro
welcomes
Willy Russell,
13, to a mobile
health care van
in New York City
on April 18.

Doctors Who Deliver

Millions of kids in the U.S. can't afford regular medical care. Health care workers hit the road to reach them.

A CHE ON WA



Doctors' offices in vans are getting kids on board for

TO PLAY ON HIS BASKETBALL team, Tommy Shelton, from Carrollton, Texas, needs to stay in top shape. Tommy, 10, must visit the doctor every few months. He suffers from diabetes and Graves' disease. Both illnesses affect how the body reacts under stress and during exercise. "If I don't take my medication, I get all out of whack. My grades go down. I don't feel good when I run," he told TFK.

To live a healthy, active life, Tommy needs good medical care. All kids, even those who don't suffer from an ongoing illness, need the attention of health care professionals. For many families, paying for visits to the doctor is a hardship. That's why organizations are going out of their way to bring kids in for checkups.

HEALTH CARE HITS THE ROAD

In cities across the U.S., hospitals and other care providers are converting

*Routine Checkup


With insurance:

\$15

Without insurance:

\$130

*ALL COSTS ARE ESTIMATED AVERAGES FOR THOSE NOT COVERED BY ANY FEDERAL OR STATE AID.



Dr. Tanesha Lawrence checks Dante, 10, in a New York City CHF van.

TIME FOR KIDS

HECKUP HEELS

and buses are
better health

Strep Test (not including doctor's fees)

With insurance:

\$3

Without insurance:

\$30

vans and buses into fully equipped medical offices. These mobile units deliver doctors and nurses to people who need them the most. The programs have more than just wheels in common. All give free or low-cost care to kids who might otherwise have to go without regular checkups.

"We have the ability to prevent so many [illnesses]," says Dr. Dina Lieser, of Docs for Tots, a group working to improve children's health and well-being. "The difference between getting regular preventive care or going without can literally mean life or death."

The Children's Health Fund (CHF) helps support a national network of 21 programs that bring medical services to kids who need care. CHF works with hospitals or health clinics to run the programs. CHF medical vans make weekly visits to schools, homeless shelters and other neighborhood sites.

Dr. Heidi Sinclair heads CHF's Baton Rouge Children's Health Project, in Louisiana. She sees patients on school grounds in the fall and at camps in the summer. "That's the fun thing about

Emergency Treatment for a Broken Arm

With insurance:

\$220

Without insurance:

\$2,200

being mobile," Dr. Sinclair says. "You can go where the need is."

REACHING UNPROTECTED KIDS

Nearly 9 million kids in the U.S. lack health insurance. Insurance helps people pay for doctor visits, prescription drugs, hospital stays and other services. Some people buy their own insurance, which can cost more than \$900 a month. Others get coverage at reduced rates from their employers.

But many hardworking Americans don't have the option to buy discounted health insurance at their jobs. Seventy-five percent of uninsured kids have at least one parent who works full time but cannot afford private insurance.

More than one in five poor children is uninsured. Two government programs provide health insurance to children living in poverty—Medicaid and State Children's Health



The SmileMobile brings dental care to kids in Washington State.

Insurance Program (SCHIP). Medicaid gives insurance to kids whose parents earn little or no money. SCHIP is for families who earn a bit more. Tommy Shelton and his family are glad that SCHIP is available to them. Some people fall through the cracks. They don't qualify for Medicaid or SCHIP, but still cannot afford insurance.

Medical vans and clinics like those run by CHF bring health care within the reach of uninsured families. Still, Dr. Lieser says that the mobile units should be only a short-term solution. "There's got to be a more cohesive medical system," she says.

—By Kathryn Satterfield

Asthma (one year of treatment)

With insurance:

\$315

Without insurance:

\$3,000



A family in New York City visits a CHF van. It is part of Montefiore Medical Center.

TIME FOR KIDS

WORLD REPORT EDITION

National Science Standards

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives

Skills

- Reading for Information
- Reflective Writing



Teaching the Cover Story On HEALTH CARE FOR KIDS

SUMMARY

Although the number of uninsured children in the U.S. has decreased by 20% over the last 10 years, there are still close to 9 million kids without health insurance. These children are more likely than others to go without needed care. This week, TIME FOR KIDS takes a look at some innovative programs that bring health care to medically underserved children throughout the country.

FAST FACTS

- Nearly **20%** of uninsured Americans are children.
- The **State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)** was started in 1997 to provide health coverage for kids whose families earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to afford private insurance.
- An estimated **5 million uninsured children** are eligible for SCHIP or Medicaid but are not enrolled.
- **Children who are insured** year-round are twice as likely to receive medical care as those who are not insured.
- The **Children's Health Fund (CHF)** was cofounded by pediatrician Irwin Redlener and singer-songwriter Paul Simon

in 1987 to provide health care to homeless and medically underserved children.

- CHF was launched with just one mobile medical unit. Today, it is a national network with **21 pediatric care programs.**

RESOURCES

Eat Your Vegetables! Drink Your Milk! by Alvin Silverstein (Franklin Watts, 2000). Part of the My Health series.

childrenshealthfund.org

CHF's official website.

kidshealth.org/kid An interactive site with games, quizzes and kid-friendly articles.

insurekidsnow.gov Links parents to free and low-cost health insurance for their children. Parents can also call 1-877-KIDS-NOW.

NONFICTION LITERACY STRATEGIES

BEFORE READING

Make Connections

- Have students share their experiences of visiting the doctor.
- Ask: Why is it important for kids to have routine checkups?

START A DISCUSSION

Think Critically

- Why do some kids not visit the doctor enough?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of medical vans?
- Besides medical care, what else do kids need in order to stay healthy?
- Is it the government's responsibility to make sure that all kids have quality health care? Explain your answer.

- What other ways can you think of to make sure that all children receive health care?

BUILD COMPREHENSION

Identify Solutions

- Have students underline examples of what is being done to bring health care to more kids.

EXTEND LEARNING

Write a Letter

Have students write to Congress with their thoughts about children's health care. Go to house.gov and senate.gov for contact information.

ASSESS COMPREHENSION

timeforkids.com/teachers

Assess student comprehension of this issue with our weekly online quiz.

TFK PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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BREAK						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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