

HEALTH

Kids Health Plan Open to Everyone

Over 30,000 already enrolled

All Oregon children now have access to high-quality, comprehensive health care under the state's Healthy Kids plan, realizing one of Gov. Ted Kulongoski's top priorities since taking office.

The Oregon Department of Human Services began providing coverage to families under Healthy KidsConnect last week, the final phase of Healthy Kids.

"This is a proud day in Oregon's history," said Kulongoski. "Now, after years of work – and multiple efforts – we can proudly stand and say, that together, we have accomplished this very important goal for Oregon's children."

Healthy Kids provides access to health care in three ways: 1) No-cost option through the Oregon Health Plan; 2) Low-cost options through cost-share models; and 3) Full-cost options through newly-created state-sponsored private insurance plans – depending on family income.

No Cost: The plan provides free coverage through the Oregon

Health Plan for children in families with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$44,100 for a family of four).



Ted Kulongoski

Low-Cost: The program offers a cost-share model to assist Oregon's middle-class families earning between 200-300 percent of the federal poverty level (between \$44,100 – \$66,000 a year for a family of four). These families earn too much to qualify for the Oregon Health Plan, but too little to

purchase private insurance on their own. On a sliding scale, these families share the cost with the state or can receive a subsidy to help pay for their child's coverage through an employer-sponsored insurance plan.

Full Cost: For children in families with incomes above 300 percent of the federal poverty level (or \$66,000 for a family of four), the program provides access to a new state-sponsored private insurance plans collectively called Healthy KidsConnect. These families pay the full premium.

To date, the state has enrolled more than 30,000 children in Healthy

Kids. The goal is to enroll 80,000 children by the end of this year.

"The parents of these children now feel more secure knowing that their children will get the health care they need, when they need

it," Kulongoski said. "But we are just getting started. We can't stop until we have finished the job and reached our goal of enrolling 80,000 children by the end of the year. The health of our children

and the future of our state depend on our success."

Parents can learn more about Healthy Kids and apply online at oregonhealthykids.gov or by calling 1-877-314-5678.

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Shave off Salt for Health

Shaving 3 grams off the daily salt intake of Americans could prevent up to 66,000 strokes, 99,000 heart attacks and 92,000 deaths, while saving \$24 billion in health costs per year, researchers report.

The benefit would be comparable to cutting smoking by 50 percent, significantly lowering obesity rates and giving cholesterol drugs to virtually everyone to prevent heart attacks, said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo of the University of California, San Francisco and colleagues.

Such a goal, they said, is readily attainable.

Salt, which contributes to high blood pressure and heart disease, is widely overused in the United States, with 75 to 80 percent coming from processed food. Men typically consume 10.4 grams per day. For women, the average is 7.3 grams. Its use is rising.

A reduction of 1 gram would prevent 11,000 to 23,000 strokes, 18,000 to 35,000 heart attacks and 15,000 to 32,000 deaths from any cause, the researchers reported in *New England Journal of Medicine*.

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