

Caring for Our Nation's Military Connected Children and Families

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While all children have distinct health care needs as compared to adults, children in military families face unique experiences due to the very nature of their parents' service to our nation. **An increased investment in Medicaid is one of the ways to show tangible support for many military-connected children and their families.**

Medicaid, and the related Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), plays a critical role for **nearly 3 million military-connected infants, children, and adolescents**. Ensuring that these military-connected children have coverage, benefits, and access to the quality age-appropriate health care that meets their unique needs is our responsibility. Policymakers must continue to prioritize strengthening Medicaid for children, including, but not limited to, increasing provider reimbursement to support the pediatric workforce, streamlining access to care, even when that care is in another state, and ensuring consistent and continuous coverage.

Military-connected children include those families with active duty, reserve, National Guard, retiree, or veteran members. Children of these families can be enrolled in Medicaid even when the servicemember is covered by TRICARE, or the veteran receives care through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Many children covered by TRICARE also rely on Medicaid due to income or serious medical conditions requiring the specialized pediatric care provided by Medicaid that is not generally covered by TRICARE or commercial plans.

Sometimes the military-connected children requiring Medicaid and CHIP are survivors of a deceased servicemember or veteran. Oftentimes Medicaid is a lifeline for families whose servicemembers are transitioning among active duty, Guard or Reserve, or veteran status and navigating from their TRICARE coverage to civilian options.

The importance of Medicaid to children in military-connected families cannot be overstated; yet the importance to the military community is not always recognized, documented, or readily understood. A better understanding of how children in military and veteran communities rely upon Medicaid will lead to a better appreciation of the importance of, and robust support for, Medicaid among a larger group of lawmakers, policymakers, and advocates. Therefore, the TFK Coalition and undersigned organizations are gratified by this report prepared by the Children's Hospital Association that begins to describe the depth and scope of the interaction and reliance of military-connected families on Medicaid and CHIP.

Sincerely,

Kara Tollett Oakley, Chair
Tricare for Kids Coalition

and
Elizabeth Dole Foundation
Exceptional Families of the Military
Military Family Advisory Network
Military Kids Matter
Military Officers Association of America
National Military Family Association
The Barry Robinson Center
The Eating Disorders Coalition
National Association for Children's
Behavioral Health

