



Coverage

With the expectations that meaningful health care reform will soon be at the top of the federal agenda, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is providing **objective and timely** information on a range of **reform ideas** to policy-makers and stakeholders.



Many of these ideas draw on the Foundation's extensive experience over the past 15 years of supporting efforts to expand and maximize enrollment in public and private coverage programs at the state level.

We believe all Americans should have stable, affordable health insurance coverage. That means coverage that is continuous and portable, and includes all necessary and appropriate health care services. It means coverage that promotes care that is both high-quality and cost-effective. We believe that all Americans having health insurance is vital for a strong economy and healthy populace, and that providing such coverage must be a shared responsibility among the public and private sectors and individuals.

Today, America stands far short of reaching this standard. More than 46 million Americans—including 9 million children—are uninsured. They live sicker and die sooner because they cannot get the care they need when they need it. A new Congress and Administration may well pursue comprehensive and meaningful health care reforms in 2009. After the last serious health care debate ended 15 years ago, RWJF broadened its national focus to include expanding options for public and private insurance programs in states. We help state policy-makers and advocates develop new ideas for significantly expanding health insurance coverage to more of their residents. We then carefully evaluate these expansion programs and share the lessons learned.

These efforts have generated salutary outcomes. Several states have passed comprehensive reforms that demonstrate different models for achieving universal or near-universal coverage for their residents. Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts have provided different, important



lessons for federal action. Other states, including Illinois and Pennsylvania, have enacted programs to cover all or nearly all of their eligible children. Others have tried to achieve major reforms but fell short—yet still offer important considerations for national reform.

In 2008 we provided technical assistance to 44 states to help them identify ways to cover more people. Ranging from small adaptations of existing regulations to overhauls of state health care programs, the technical assistance we provided is a key ingredient of innovations at the state level. Twelve states have taken part in our Coverage Institute, managed by our *State Coverage Initiatives* program, where states develop and implement reform proposals with help from national experts and through coordinated dialogue with officials from other states facing similar challenges. We launched efforts in 18 states to strengthen local consumer advocacy networks through the *Consumer Voices for Coverage* program.

In 2009 we will implement a three-pronged strategy to work further toward achieving our goal. We will:

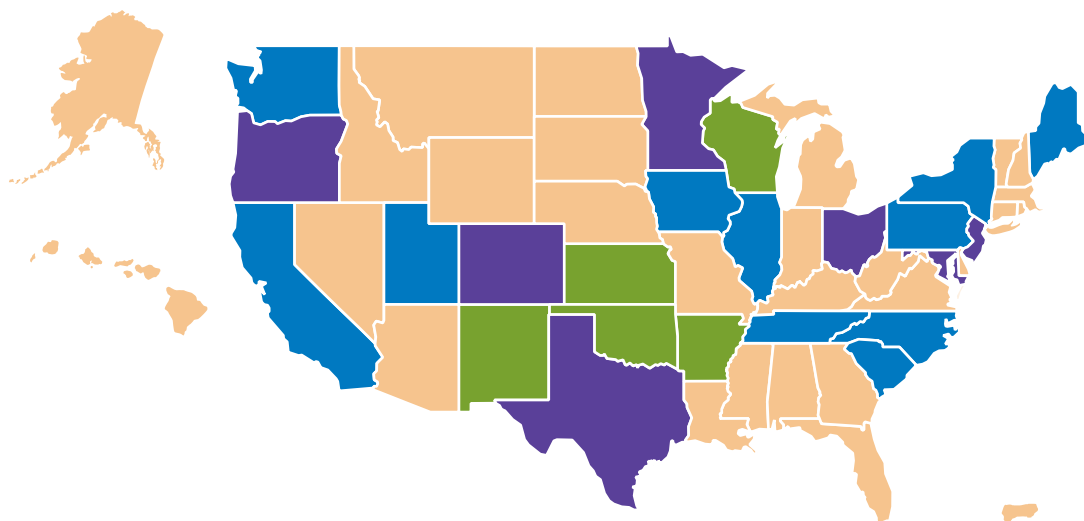
1. Continue work in states to develop, advocate for and implement policies to expand coverage—and we will test and share the lessons learned.
2. Support eight states to enhance Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP) so that more eligible kids can be enrolled or retained in these vital programs.
3. Provide timely and objective research on a range of reform topics to support policy development and dialogue about comprehensive reform ideas.

For additional information about our initiatives and objectives, visit

www.rwjf.org/coverage.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation State-Based Coverage Initiatives: *Consumer Voices for Coverage* and *State Coverage Initiatives*



- *Consumer Voices for Coverage Initiative*
- *State Coverage Initiatives*
- *Both Consumer Voices for Coverage and State Coverage Initiatives*
- *None*

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008.