

Health Access in the Fox Valley

May 2023

Every child and family in the Fox Valley and across Wisconsin deserves to live happy healthy lives with affordable, quality health care, regardless of race, income, or zip code.

However, many residents of the Fox Valley area face barriers to receiving health care, including lack of access, extremely high cost, and lack of insurance coverage. This is particularly true for residents with low incomes; Black, Indigenous, and other people of color; as well as people who speak English as a second language.¹ These barriers can lead to unmet health needs and higher financial burdens. As a result, people of color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, those identifying as LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities are more likely to face health disparities.

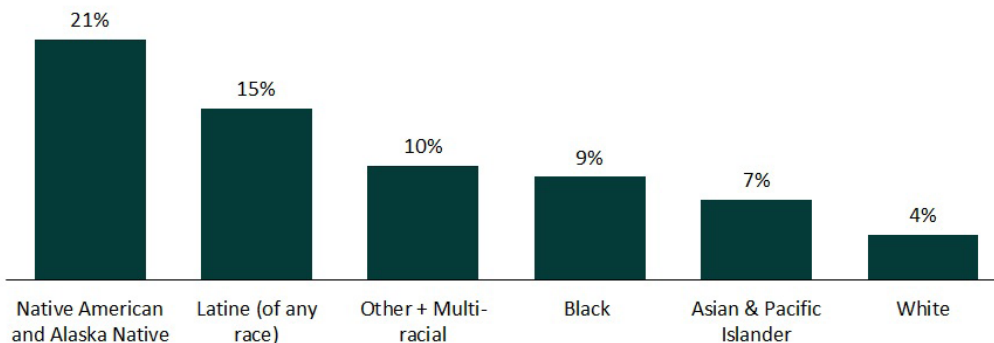
Medicaid & BadgerCare

Medicaid provides health insurance for more than one million people in Wisconsin. BadgerCare, one of several Medicaid programs, is health insurance for kids, parents, and adults with low incomes who typically don't have access to coverage through their job. Medicaid also offers long term care for people with disabilities and older adults who need support to stay independent in their communities. [Learn more about how Medicaid supports Wisconsin children & families here.](#)

The governor's budget proposal takes important steps towards increasing health equity by expanding BadgerCare eligibility to 138% of the federal poverty level (\$38,300 annually for a family of four). Currently, in the Fox Valley, high percentages of communities of color lack access to health insurance. If state leaders [follow the lead of 39 other states in expanding Medicaid](#), more families of color and families with low incomes in the Fox Valley will have access to affordable health coverage through BadgerCare.

Lack of Health Insurance in the Fox Valley

Percentage of Individuals With No Health Insurance by Race



Source: Kids Forward analysis of data from US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Notes: Data are for Calumet, Outagamie, and Winnebago County

The Governor's budget also proposes extending BadgerCare postpartum coverage to 12 months. This extension would address racial disparities by supporting maternal and infant health, which deeply impacts Black mothers and babies in our state. [Black women experience pregnancy-related mortality at a rate that is 5 times higher](#) than for white women in Wisconsin. In the Fox Valley, 13% of Black babies in Outagamie County and 14% of Black babies in Winnebago County had low birth weights, in contrast to 8% of low-birth weights statewide.² Extending postpartum coverage for one year will ensure continuity of care for parents and infants, and will allow for more mothers to have what they need to give their babies the healthiest start, such as recovery from birth, follow-up on pregnancy complications, and access to early screening for the baby.

If policymakers work together to approve these investments, more children and adults in the Fox Valley will have access to affordable health care, which is one step towards allowing everyone in Wisconsin the opportunity to thrive and live longer, healthier lives.

Take Action

Contact your legislators and let them know that Wisconsin's children & families deserve better:

1. Find your representatives: maps.legis.wisconsin.gov
2. Use our budget analyses here to help inform your comments: kidsforward.org/category/tax-issues/
3. Sharing your personal experiences in your own voice is incredibly powerful.
4. To learn more about how to advocate for more equitable education policies in Wisconsin, read [Standing up for Racial Justice: A Starter Guide on Policy and Advocacy in Wisconsin: kidsforward.org/standing-up-for-racial-justice/](#).

View the Starter Guide in English, Spanish, or Hmong here:



Community Resources

- [Casa Hispana: casahispanawi.org](https://casahispanawi.org)
- [Multicultural Coalition, Inc: ourmci.org](https://ourmci.org)
- [New Hmong Professionals: newhmongprofessionals.org](https://newhmongprofessionals.org)
- [Partnership Community Health Center: partnershipchc.org](https://partnershipchc.org)

Contact

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About Kids Forward

Kids Forward inspires action and promotes access to opportunity for every kid, every family, and every community in Wisconsin, notably children and families of color and those furthest from opportunity. We envision a Wisconsin where every child thrives. Using a research- and community-informed approach, we advocate for effective, long-lasting solutions that break down barriers to success for children and families. Visit us at KidsForward.org.

¹ Partnership Community Health Center Needs Assessment, 2022

² Kids Forward analysis of data from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2022