



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN KIDS LOSE THEIR HEALTH INSURANCE?

By Christine Ma, M.D., Medical Director

Almost every child we saw at our last scheduled dental clinic lacked dental insurance. One child was four years old and had at least three cavities. Several more children also had cavities. Luckily, none of these children had yet experienced painful infections from their cavities making it too painful to eat, too distracting to play or learn or sleep. However, with dental disease being one of the most common chronic medical conditions in children, it is not surprising that with the rising rates of the uninsured, I am once again seeing a surge in dental disease in children.

Kerry's Kids is now in our 21st year. After years of seeing children in our medical clinics with extensive dental disease, sometimes as many as eight or nine large cavities, we were able to start a dental program eight years ago. Through this program, children can receive cleanings, get x-rays, and have disease treated.

Changes in legislation a few years ago improved access to health and dental insurance. We were thrilled to see fewer uninsured children and a lower rate of dental disease. However, this trend has proven to be short lived. In the past two years, as the access to health insurance has once again come under threat, more and more children are losing their health insurance. I have started again to see a gradual surge in the number of children with cavities.

In our medical clinics, we see similar stories. At a recent clinic, I saw a two-year old who had a cold and was wheezing. His mom brought in his empty asthma inhaler and asked if we would be able to give him a new one, which we did. How can we live in one of the wealthiest countries in the world and have so many children with life-threatening illnesses in families who cannot afford health care so that their children can thrive?

This past year, an additional half a million children lost their insurance, leaving 5.5% of our children uninsured. Who are these 1 in 20 kids without insurance? These are some of the children living in poverty in our neighborhoods. These are some of the children who are living in the homeless shelters where we hold our clinics. These are children with two working parents, or if a single parent family then with one working parent, working two or three jobs to try to keep a roof over their head and food on the table. And these are children who run around playing tag, laughing at silly games, walking with their best friend at lunchtime at school, and sliding down the slide at the park.

As the medical director of this safety net organization, my hope is that one day our services will no longer be needed. However, until that time, Kerry's Kids will continue to offer free medicine, vaccines, fillings for cavities, check-ups so that kids can enroll in school, and much more for those who lack health insurance, who are homeless, and who struggle with accessing the health care that every child deserves. I am grateful to all our volunteer doctors, dentists and nurses, and to our donors and supporters for making this care possible.





What our parents are saying:

Today was very kid-friendly, organized, and [my child] really enjoyed this visit. Usually he's really afraid of the dentist. The dentist seeing him was like another family member, talking to him and making him feel comfortable.

...

It was great. I love it. Every time I come, the staff is kid-friendly, pretty awesome. I would say it's a 10. I would recommend people to come.

...

I'm very thankful that this [clinic] is available for us. [My child] doesn't have insurance right now. It was an amazing experience. It was good to know he should be flossing and it was very convenient for us.

A Message from the President of the Board

By Diane Halberg, M.D.

One night a few weeks ago, I was volunteering at one of our Kerry's Kids sites in Berkeley. That evening I met J and his mother, and I was reminded of why I love being a part of this organization.

J and his mom had arrived in the US two months ago. She spoke Spanish and could neither read nor write. J was playful, active and healthy. He was already enrolled in preschool in Oakland and clearly on the road to a life different from his mother's.

J's medical records had been left behind in his country and would not be retrievable. This is not an unusual situation for newcomers to the U.S. He would need to have a documented physical exam and would need to receive a new series of vaccines in order to stay in preschool. J does not have medical insurance, and it is uncertain when or how he will be able to obtain insurance in the future.

This is the reason Kerry Kids exists, to provide health care to children who would otherwise fall through the cracks, those who are unfortunate enough to not have health insurance and are therefore unable to access health care. As I spoke with his mom through an interpreter and heard of some of the sacrifices she was making to allow her son to have new opportunities, I was grateful to be able to provide my services.

We are living in a time in this country where the holes in our safety net have become larger. Families are being threatened that utilizing government services may jeopardize their future and result in deportation back to the dangers from which they, with great courage, have fled.

I look forward to a time where an organization like ours is superfluous. Where people, particularly children, are assured of basic medical care. But now is not that time, and until then I am so proud to be a part of Kerry's Kids.

Kerry's Kids Evolves with the Times: Dental care is part of the mission

By Dan Dean, Kerry's Kids Board Treasurer

When Kerry's Kids was founded 21 years ago, its mission was focused on providing medical care to underserved children in the communities or shelters where they live and to facilitate connecting each child to a permanent medical provider. Our mission has expanded over the past decade to include dental care due to rising demand for this service. Over the past year I personally experienced the need for dental care, and the difficulty of finding providers for children who need it.

My wife Deb and I volunteer together as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). A CASA is a trained volunteer, appointed by a judge, to represent a foster child. Our purpose is to build a relationship so we can effectively advocate for the child's needs and appropriately represent them in court proceedings. Given privacy reasons we can't name the child or provide details about their placement. However, I do want to share one of our more meaningful experiences serving as CASAs. We have been assigned to our foster child for more than three years. As they are now in their teenage years, their dental needs associated with crooked teeth became an increasing concern. Our foster child has had multiples placements and is in a new school each year. This makes it difficult to create lasting friendships, which can lead to teasing associated with being the new student in town. Braces would have been required for any of our own children many years earlier. Through Deb's research and report writing we could demonstrate to the court that our CASA child's need for orthodontia was medically necessary. Once the insurance was approved, finding a provider remained a challenge. After several phone calls, and working with the foster parents, we found an orthodontist over 30 miles away from our child's placement who would take the County-approved insurance and reimbursement rate. I am pleased to report the braces are installed and our CASA kid is on his way to a nice new smile. I can just imagine the difficulty of finding preventive dental care for underserved children in the shelters and communities served by Kerry's Kids.

This experience made me grateful to our board members who advocated for an expansion of Kerry's Kids mission to include dental care a few years ago. Thanks to our board, our volunteers, and our financial supporters who make this all possible! I appreciate you all so much.



This year Kerry's Kids earned a 2019 Platinum Seal of Transparency,

the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar, the world's largest source of nonprofit information. By sharing metrics that highlight progress Kerry's Kids is making toward its mission, the organization is helping donors move beyond simplistic ways of nonprofit evaluation such as overhead ratios.

In accordance with our long-held belief in being transparent about our work we are excited to convey our organization's results in a user-friendly and highly visual manner. By earning a Platinum Seal, we can now easily share a wealth of up-to-date organizational metrics with our supporters as well as GuideStar's online audience, which includes donors, grant-makers, our peers, and the media.

To reach the Platinum level, Kerry's Kids provided 5 years of information to its GuideStar Nonprofit Profile: basic contact and organizational information; in-depth financial information; qualitative information about goals, strategies, and capabilities; and quantitative information about results and progress toward its mission.

We're shining a spotlight on the difference you all help us make in the community. Plus, we've provided fresh information to 200+ charitable websites and applications that use GuideStar data, such as AmazonSmile, Facebook, and Network for Good.

Check out our GuideStar Nonprofit Profile and tell us what you think:
<https://www.guidestar.org/profile/02-0569175>
(or simply search "Kerry's Kids" at www.guidestar.org).

BIG NEWS!

Kerry's Kids is partnering with YMCA of the East Bay's Head Start Program to start a new clinic site in East Oakland in January 2020. Accessing health care in a timely fashion for families in East Oakland has been challenging, so we are pleased to be able to expand services to help meet some of this need.



For every \$50 donated, we are able to provide one albuterol inhaler, dental cleanings for 2 children, or treat 3 children for ear infections.

A Thank You from The Spooner Family

When Kerry wrote her application for medical school, she included this quote from Richard Bach: "You are never given a wish without the power to make it come true."

Kerry's belief, her wish, was that it was her responsibility to use her time and talent to provide medical care to the underserved in her community; that this care would be provided with love, with caring and with respect. She made a start but didn't have the gift of time to bring her dream to full fruition.

Kerry's dream is being fulfilled because of your financial gifts and volunteering your time and talent. We know that Kerry is watching and guiding and is celebrating these gifts you have given.

From Kerry and her family, we thank you for supporting Kerry's dream. To again quote Richard Bach: "We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures." Your generosity and prayers fill our hearts.

*Kerry's Mom and Dad:
Mary and Herb*

*Kerry's sister and family:
Erin, Rick, Ellie and Lane*

Kerry's Kids Board of Directors

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

“Kerry’s Kids provides free health care and education to underserved children in their neighborhoods and seeks to facilitate that each child ultimately receives care in a permanent medical home.”



If you shop on Amazon, we encourage you to sign up for Amazon Smile at <http://smile.amazon.com/about> and designate Kerry’s Kids as the recipient of the donations from any purchases you make. Amazon donates 0.5% of the cost of items purchased through Amazon Smile to the nonprofit organization of your choice.

When you go online to purchase items be sure to use the Amazon Smile link at <http://smile.amazon.com> instead of using the regular Amazon website.

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Check out our new website!



Kerry’s Kids relies on donations from corporations and individuals

Thank you to the many volunteers who generously donated their time, and a special thank you to everyone who gives to Kerry’s Kids.

Please consider a contribution using the enclosed envelope or online through www.guidestar.org. More information about online giving can be found at www.kerrysids.org.

We also accept



We are a 501(c) 3 organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible.