

Have You Considered Using “Parent Mentors” to Help Insure Your Uninsured Patients Get Insured?

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Dr. Lewis First, MD, MPH, Editor-in-Chief, Pediatrics

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With more than 6 million children in this country being uninsured despite the majority being eligible for Medicaid, we are constantly looking for ways to help the uninsured child become registered for Medicaid or CHIP. This week, Flores et al. ([10.1542/peds.2015-3519](#)) share with us the results of an important randomized trial of using “parent mentors” (PMs) to help insure minority children.

A PM was a parent who had at least one child insured by Medicaid or CHIP who was then trained over a 2-day period before working for a year to help minority families complete insurance applications, and establish medical homes among other social needs. Non-PM families were given the usual information about how to access Medicaid and CHIP. The authors looked at which of the families (those who got the PM intervention and those who were the controls) had health insurance a year later.

The results of this well-done study strongly indicate the important role PMs appear to be playing in getting children insured and in getting them the health services these children needed—and what’s even more impressive is the effect lasted two years after the PM stopped working with a family compared to controls. Families who had PMs were extremely satisfied with their help in getting their child insured. Finally, if you’re worried about the cost of a PM, you shouldn’t be.

The authors show that PMS cost a child about \$53 per child per month but saved the system more than \$6000 per insured child per year! If you care for a low-income uninsured population of minority children and have not yet thought about creating a PM program, this study will convince you to get started with such a program as soon as you are done reading it!

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