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# Advocate

January 2017

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## Future of Health Care Access

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### Advocacy Opportunities Abound: You Can Make a Difference

Advocates know 2017 will present new advocacy opportunities to improve outcomes for Tennessee children across a wide range of issues. What happens in 2017 will determine the future prosperity of our state and nation. It will determine whether the foundation of services and supports for health and development is sturdy or becomes more fragile.

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## Tennesseans Can Impact Health Care Changes

As chair of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Tennessee Sen. Lamar Alexander has provided important leadership for landmark legislation in recent years – the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, and the 21st Century Cures Act in 2016. In 2017, he will have a new and important leadership opportunity related to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). What Congress decides regarding the repeal/replacement of the ACA will have a significant impact on access to health insurance, health status and healthy outcomes.

Change should provide an opportunity for improvements. While there are parts of the law that are challenging, some provisions of the ACA have strong support across the board:

- Coverage for young people on their parents' insurance to age 26;
- Coverage for preventive services;
- Coverage regardless of preexisting conditions.

Tennessee advocates should encourage Sen. Alexander to ensure the legislation does not just repeal the ACA, but replaces it with step-by-step reforms that transform the health care delivery system. New legislation should put patients in charge, give them more choices and reduce the cost of health care so more people can afford it. The ACA has resulted in coverage for millions of Americans, including children. It should not be repealed until there is a plan for better, more affordable care, coverage and consumer protections.

Repealing without replacement threatens to destabilize the insurance market, potentially resulting in loss of coverage for people, including children, with preexisting conditions or disabilities, and the accompanying loss of security and peace of mind that comes with health coverage.

Tennesseans should contact both Sen. Alexander by [email](#) or phone 202-224-4944 and Sen. Bob Corker [email](#) or phone 202-224-3344 and ask them to replace the ACA as they repeal it to better protect Tennessee children and families.

Thanks!

*Quida Neal*

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## Congresswoman Black To Lead Influential Committee

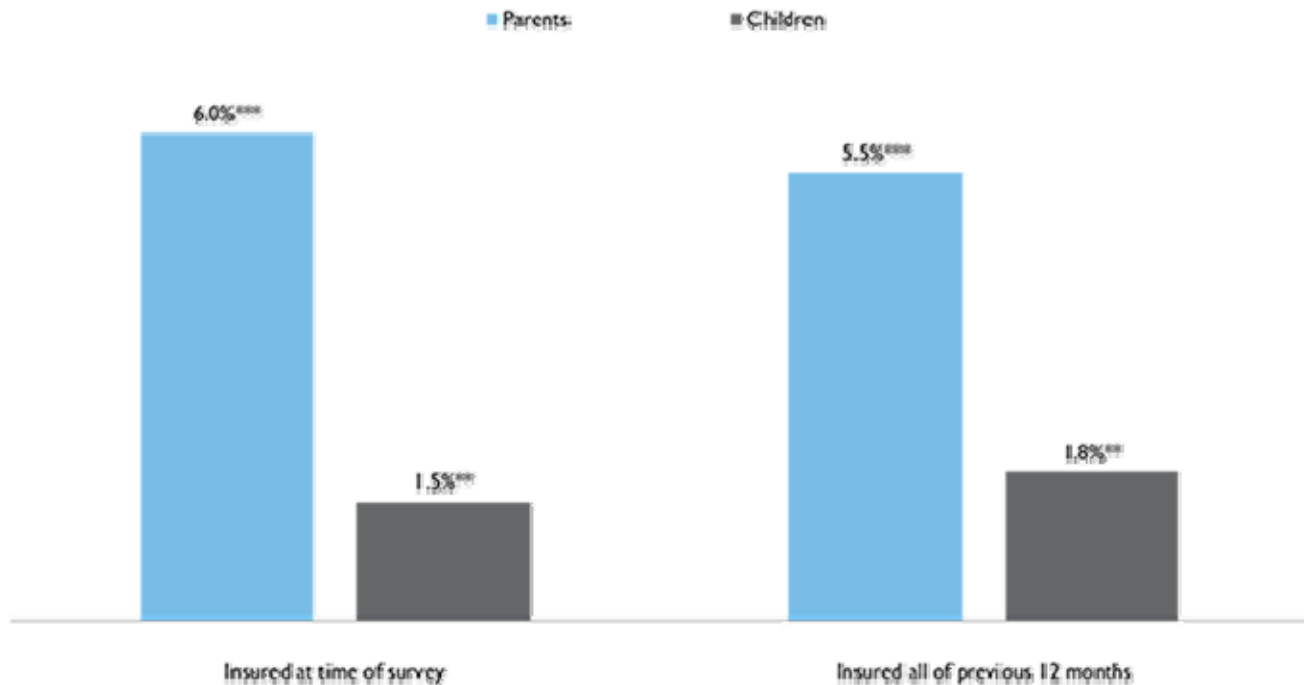
Tennessee's Sixth District Rep. Diane Black has been selected interim chair of the House Budget Committee. Her position will become permanent when the current chair, Rep. Tom Price, who has been selected to serve as secretary of Health and Human Services, is confirmed. The House Budget Committee determines overall guidelines of federal spending, which are contained in an annual budget resolution, and considers the President's budget. If, as expected, the congressional majority uses this process to repeal the Affordable Care Act, this committee will be important in efforts to continue improved access to health care.

Citizens in the Sixth District should contact both Rep. Black by [email](#) or phone 202-225-4231 and ask her to make sure efforts to replace the ACA will better protect Tennessee children and families.

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## Number of Uninsured Has Fallen, But Uncertainties Abound

Figure 1. Percentage-Point Increase in Health Insurance Coverage for Parents Ages 18 to 64 and Children Age 17 and Under between June/September 2013 and March 2016



Source: Health Reform Monitoring Survey, quarters 2-3 2013 and quarter 1 2016.

Note: Estimates are regression-adjusted.

<sup>\*\*\*\*/\*\*\*</sup> Estimate differs significantly from zero at the .10/.05/.01 level, using two-tailed tests.

Policymakers face difficult choices on the future of health care access. The Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan congressional agency set up to give lawmakers information on which to base decisions, has said repealing health care reform will increase the federal deficit.

Retaining popular aspects of the current law and rejecting unpopular ones could increase the deficit and/or decrease the number of people able to get access to care. Unpopular aspects, those promised to be cut when changes are made – individual mandate and the requirement for employers with more than 50 full-time workers to provide health care coverage – were included to spread the costs and the risks and move people into the health care system prior to their need for coverage. Taxes added to keep the program solvent are proposed to be eliminated. These tax cuts will help wealthier citizens.

Without a replacement for the ACA 81 percent of the people covered under the ACA, will lose coverage.

Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, December 2016, **526,000 Tennessee Residents Would Lose Coverage in 2019 Under ACA Repeal**, <http://bit.ly/2hZkkTb>.

McCarthy, D., et al. The Commonwealth Fund, **Aiming Higher: Results From a Scorecard on State Health System Performance**, 2015 Ed, <http://bit.ly/2iiRdla>.

Wolf, S.H. et al., Urban Institute, **The Health of the State, Summary: How U.S. States Compare in Health Status and the Factors that Shape Health**, <http://urbn.is/2hwFati>.

Karpman M., et al., Urban Institute Health Policy Center, **Health Reform Monitoring Survey: Health Care Coverage, Access, and Affordability for Children and Parents: New estimates from March 2016** <http://urbn.is/2icgs1V>.

Reynolds, M.E., Brookings Institution Fixgov, **Keeping tabs on a potential ACA repeal: Three questions to watch**, <http://brook.gs/2hSnUi1>.

Lueck, S., Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, **Republicans Can't Repeal Health Reform and Keep Current Pre-Existing Condition Protections**, <http://bit.ly/2hXKZNe>.

Congressional Budget Office, **Budgetary and Economic Effects of Repealing the Affordable Care Act**, June 19, 2015, <http://bit.ly/2hQYn6a>

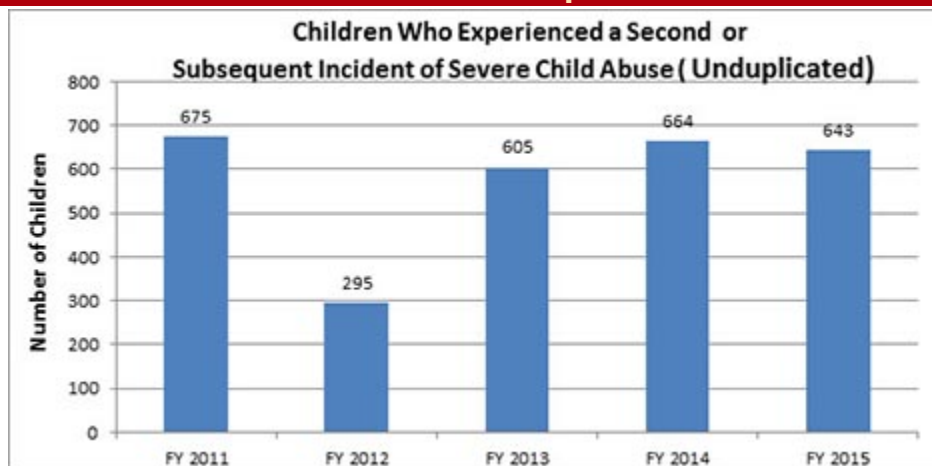
Leibluft, J. & Park, E. *Center of Budget and Policy Priorities*, **ACA Repeal Would Leave Inadequate Resources for Replacement and Put Medicaid and Medicare at Risk**: <http://bit.ly/2hS0UQ0>.

Buettgens, M. et al., Urban Institute, **The Cost of ACA Repeal**, <http://urbn.is/2iv165b>.

Schencker, Lisa, McClatchyDS, **How a repeal of Obamacare could affect you even if you have employer health insurance**, <http://bit.ly/2i2pApp>.

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## Second Look Commission Annual Report on Child Abuse

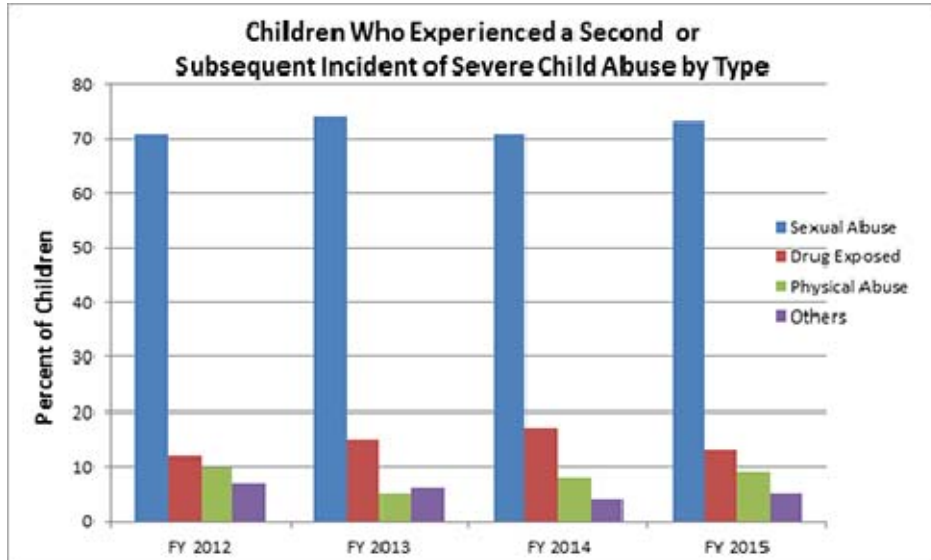


The Second Look Commission (SLC) released its annual report on efforts to prevent recurrence of incidents of child abuse

The findings and recommendations in the 2016 Second Look Commission Report are primarily based on the FY 2015 list of cases provided by DCS. During its 2016 case reviews, the SLC identified some recurring issues such as:

- Failure to report child abuse;
- Family failing to comply with No Contact orders;
- Lack of appropriate communication and collaboration between child abuse prevention and investigation stakeholders;
- Improper case file documentation; and
- The need to focus on issue-driven vs. incident-driven investigations.

The need to improve drug-exposed children/infants investigations continues to be an issue. In reviewing the child death cases on the FY 2015 list of cases, the SLC found law enforcement should treat all child death investigations as homicide investigations until the evidence dictates otherwise. Additionally, DCS needs to receive autopsy reports as soon as reasonably possible. Several of the findings and recommendations highlighted the need for additional training in areas including interviewing collateral witnesses and accessing the complete DCS history on a family. The SLC also supports additional funding, resources and training for the proper use of extended forensic interviews.



2016 Second Look Commission Report, <http://bit.ly/2hWF7E4>.

Gonzalez, T., WPLN, **Watchdog Group: Tennessee Child Abuse Laws And Judge's Orders Are Being Ignored**, <http://bit.ly/2hRbDv0>.

Mojica, A., WZTV 17, **643 Tennessee children victims of multiple incidents of severe child abuse**, <http://bit.ly/2j9qFws>.

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## Tennessee Legislative Policymakers Return

The Tennessee General Assembly will convene Jan. 10, 2017. Since this is the beginning of a new two-year legislative assembly and the November election resulted in changes in personnel among the members, the first week will be spent reorganizing the new 110th General Assembly. This will include election of the new Lieutenant Governor, Sen. Randy McNally, and re-election of the Speaker of the House, Rep. Beth Harwell, on Tuesday, Jan. 10, along with election of the House Speaker Pro Tempore, Rep. Curtis Johnson. The General Assembly will meet in Joint Session to re-elect all three Constitutional Officers. The Comptroller of the Treasury and State Treasurer are elected for two-year terms, while the Secretary of State serves a four-year term. The House and Senate will also make new committee assignments.

Legislative work will begin in the weeks that follow, and legislation must be formally filed in early February. The Governor's State of the State Address should occur on January 30, along with release of his proposed budget.

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth meets February 16 and 17 to review legislation filed in the 2017 General Assembly. TCCY will gather information on issues being considered this

year and share legislative guidance with child advocates. Steve Petty, TCCY policy advocate, will again be providing information on the work of the General Assembly on TCCY's website and through his *Update*.

TCCY Legislative Information: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/tccy-legislat>.

Legislative Report: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/legislat.pdf>.

Legislative Update: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/legupdat.pdf>.

Weekly Calendar: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/leg-wkcal.pdf>.

TCCY Budget Recommendations: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/leg-recommend.pdf>.

TCCY Legislative Listserv: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/tccy-legislat#sthash.WVRPlxO1.dpuf>

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## Children's Advocacy Days 2017

TCCY's Children's Advocacy Days will be held March 14-15 at the War Memorial Auditorium in Nashville. The theme of Children's Advocacy Days is "Launching Tennessee's Next Generation." It will have a space exploration motif. Information about Children's Advocacy Days will be available on TCCY's website (<http://tn.gov/tccy>).

TCCY will be accepting nominations for the 2017 Jim Pryor Child Advocate and Youth Excellence awards until early February.

**Jim Pryor Child Advocate Award**, <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/aw-pryor17.pdf>.

**Youth Excellence Award**, <http://tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/aw-yexcl17.pdf>.

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## Welcomes and Farewells During 2016

**Commission.** TCCY said good-bye to Commission members Ethan Flynn and Bill Haynes and welcomed Lisa Hill from Memphis, Johnson City Juvenile Court Judge Sharon Green and Stanton Mayor Allan Sterbinsky. Two new youth members, Destiny Sweeney from Cleveland and Robert Terrell who lives in Nashville, were appointed. The following Commission members were reappointed: Petrina Jones Jesz, Phil Acord, Audrey Taylor Gonzalez, Genesis Hardin, Steven Neely and Glenda Terry. Jill Grayson Stott resigned from the Commission, but she did not say good-bye.

**Staff.** Diane Wise, Northeast Regional Coordinator with the Commission for many years, retired June 15. Jill Grayson Stott took on the role of the Northeast regional coordinator. Jennifer Drake-Croft began work with TCCY March 20, as director of Early Childhood Well-Being.

TCCY Website, [tn.gov/tccy](http://tn.gov/tccy).

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## Update



Richard Kennedy, TCCY associate director, has earned a Blue Belt from the Tennessee Government Leadership Council Leadership Black Belt Program. Belts are awarded based on a point system established by the program. The next level is a Green Belt, followed by the Black Belt.

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## Mark Your Calendar

Jan. 20, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., **East Tennessee Council on Children and Youth** presents "Human Trafficking," training event. Kingston Hall, Bridgewater Place, 205 Bridgewater Rd NW, Knoxville. Contact [Lindsey.Cody@tn.gov](mailto:Lindsey.Cody@tn.gov).

March 14-15, 2017, **Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium. Contact: [John.Rust@tn.gov](mailto:John.Rust@tn.gov).

March 29-31, **Child Welfare League of America** 2017 Conference, "Advancing Excellence in Practice and Policy: Highlighting Successful Strategies to Address the Needs of Children, Youth and Families," Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington, DC. Register at <http://bit.ly/2erh8QG>.

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## In the News

Carney, J. *The Hill*, **Key GOP senator (Lamar Alexander): Replacing Obamacare could take years**, <http://bit.ly/2hEynwV>.

Fletcher, Holly, *Tennessean*, **Obamacare's Tennessee inroads tenuous under Trump** <http://tnne.ws/2haewoD>.

Wadhvani, A. *Tennessean*, **Tennessee Children's Services nears the end of court oversight: Child advocates filed suit in 2000**, <http://tnne.ws/2hKODLz>.

Witcomb, D, *Reuters*, **"Drinking, drug use largely down among U.S. teens in 2016,"** <http://reut.rs/2hpoZxn>.

Tatter, G., *Chalkbeat-TN*, **"Tennessee's school turnaround district might lose some power. Here's why,"** <http://bit.ly/2hrrk8k>.

WTVF, **Haslam Announces 'Tennessee Fosters' Program**, <http://bit.ly/2g7HvWz>.

*Education Week*, **"Student Trauma: How School Leaders Can Respond"** (Registration may be required), <http://bit.ly/2hznDk0>.

Wong, A., *The Atlantic*, "**The American Obsession with Parenting**" (socioeconomic gaps in child rearing behavior growing despite increase among all incomes), <http://theatlntc/2gQtb8m>.

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## Research Information

Sycamore Institute, **Tennessee State Budget Primer: A Foundation for Understanding Our State's Public Policies**, <http://bit.ly/2gE96E1>.

United Health Foundation, **America's Annual Report Health Rankings 2016**, <http://bit.ly/2hKo6A5>.

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## Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

### Children Without Health Insurance by Age

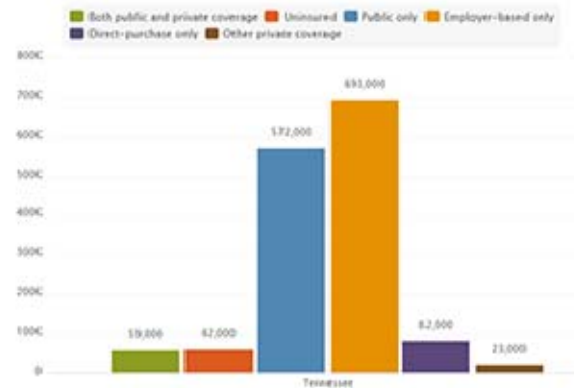


CHILDREN WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE BY AGE GROUP: 2 SELECTED (PERCENT)

National KIDS COUNT  
KIDS COUNT Data Center, [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)  
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2h3OhjN>

### Children Who Have Health Insurance by Type



CHILDREN WHO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE BY HEALTH INSURANCE TYPE: ALL (NUMBER) - 2015

National KIDS COUNT  
KIDS COUNT Data Center, [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)  
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2i2FPmy>

Larger versions of the above graphics are available by clicking on the links under the graphic. More data on Tennessee child well-being are available at <http://bit.ly/15alkVu>.

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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