

## PROJECT BRIEF

### Assessment of Children with Special Health Care Needs

---

#### **Background**

The Milwaukee Health Department and the Wisconsin Southeast Regional Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) were interested in understanding the level of need and prevalence of CSHCN in the City of Milwaukee. It was determined that a survey of the Milwaukee area was needed to obtain a prevalence estimate.

#### **Methods**

A survey to identify children with special health care needs in the Milwaukee metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was conducted using the CSHCN Screener<sup>®</sup>. The survey was administered as part of the annual Greater Milwaukee Survey in October and November of 2004. Results from this survey were compared to state and national data from the 2001 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs. The screener will continue to be administered as part of the Greater Milwaukee Survey to monitor and track children's health status in the future.

#### **Results**

The prevalence of CSHCN in the City of Milwaukee (23.5%) was found to be almost double that of the surrounding Milwaukee MSA counties (12.1%), the state (13.4%) and the nation (12.8%). The number and type of positive screener questions were not significantly different among the geographic areas.

#### **Conclusions/Policy Implications**

The prevalence of CSHCN has been consistently associated with poverty in numerous other studies. The survey conducted in Milwaukee MSA indicated increased prevalence in the City of Milwaukee among poor and African American children. Improvement and augmentation of services available to urban poor is necessary to alleviate this excessive burden.

#### **Funding Source**

State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services through Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

#### **Publication**

Partington, S., Cisler, R., & Blair, K. (2006). Prevalence of Children with Special Health Care Needs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Data from the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area. *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, 105(3), 30-35.

[http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/\\_WMS/publications/wmj/issues/wmj\\_v105n3/Partington.pdf](http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/_WMS/publications/wmj/issues/wmj_v105n3/Partington.pdf)

#### **Key Partners**

*Center for Urban Population Health*  
Susan Partington, Ph.D.  
Ron Cisler, Ph.D.

*Milwaukee Health Department*  
Kathy Blair, M.S.