

PROJECT BRIEF

Children with Special Health Care Needs in Milwaukee

Background

According to the 2000-2002 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics, the national prevalence estimate of CSHCN was 12.8%. The Wisconsin statewide prevalence estimate was 13.4%. This survey, however, wasn't designed to collect this type of data for county or municipal levels. The Milwaukee Health Department, the Wisconsin Southeast Regional Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN), and the Center for Urban Population Health were interested in understanding the level of need and prevalence of CSHCN in the City of Milwaukee.

Methods

A survey to identify children with special health care needs in the Milwaukee metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was conducted using the CSHCN Screener[®]. 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.

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Publication

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Key Partners

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The Center for Urban Population Health is a partnership among the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Aurora Health Care, Inc. Our mission is advancing population health research and education to improve the health of urban communities.