A Congressional Briefing: The Effect of the Great Recession on Child Well-Being

Sponsored by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)

February 3, 2015
We are engaged in projects across several domains of child health.

Report Overview: Kathleen Noonan, JD and Rachel Meadows, MPA

- The PolicyLab approach
- The 2010 and 2014 reports: major themes
- Key findings from this report

A View from the Field: Commentary from State Experts

- Bruce Lesley, Moderator, President of First Focus
- Marta Beresin, JD, Staff Attorney, The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
- Antoinette Laskey, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Safe and Healthy Families, Eccles Outpatient Center, Salt Lake City
- George Hoover, Health Policy Director, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

Challenges Ahead

- David Rubin, MD, MSCE, Co-Director, PolicyLab at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Associate Program Director, Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program; and Professor of Pediatrics, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
Our care for children and families drives our research, informing practice and policy to improve child health.
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THE 2010 AND 2014 REPORTS: MAJOR THEMES

• It takes several years after a recession for recovery to happen

• The social safety net programs mitigate negative effects of recession
• During the recession, millions of kids fell into poverty, which we know is linked to adverse health outcomes

• Investments in Medicaid and CHIP resulted in increased rates of health insurance coverage for children

• The ACA is an adult-focused law, and some provisions do not help children and families

• The ACA also creates uncertainty about the future of CHIP

• **Policy priority**: Maintain the success of Medicaid and CHIP
In 2013, a post-recession peak of 15.7 million children were living in food insecure households.

SNAP participation rates soared during the Great Recession, and remain much higher than pre-recession levels despite a recent decline.

ARRA funding helped to bolster SNAP benefit levels, but that funding is almost gone.

Policy priority: Boost investments in other child nutrition programs to mitigate ARRA cuts, and address barriers to enrollment.
KEY FINDINGS: HOUSING STABILITY

• As of 2012, more than one-third of U.S. households were considered “cost burdened”

• The foreclosure crisis, which has already impacted over 2.3 million children, is still unfolding

• The number of homeless children is increasing

• **Policy priority:** Support programs that provide affordable homes to families, mitigate home foreclosure, and prevent homelessness
• The incidence of neglect increased through the Great Recession, and has remained high

• There is uncertainty about child abuse rates because of conflicting federal and hospital data

• While total child welfare spending increased incrementally during the Great Recession and years following, its rate of increase is now slowing

• **Policy priority**: Reconcile conflicting child abuse data and address funding variability
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CHALLENGES AHEAD: A FRAGILE FUTURE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

• ARRA funding helped bolster spending, but is almost depleted

• Since 2010, the federal government and some state governments have made significant reductions to safety net programs

• The Great Recession continues to negatively impact state and local government revenues, and not all states have recovered at the same pace

• **Policy priority**: Ensure future viability and strength of safety net programs and focus on efforts to reduce poverty long-term