



1/17/2019

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El Centro Clients, Families, and Communities Deserve KanCare Expansion

In the Kansas City Metro area, we take great pride in being able to access some of the highest-quality healthcare facilities and services! It's no secret. However, as time continues to pass by, more Latino families are coming to realize the barriers they face in accessing care and why oftentimes they are excluded from it entirely. They are **uninsured**, their biggest barrier in accessing care.

The first question when asked about anything related to healthcare is, "Do you have insurance?" No, many do not. Overall, Latinos make up the largest uninsured groups in both Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in Kansas:

Wyandotte County	Population of Latinos:	Percentages of Uninsured Latinos:
	27.2% (43,739 out of 160,806)	39.9% (14,436 out of 36,181)
Johnson County	Population of Latinos:	Percentages of Uninsured Latinos:
	7.3% (41,377 out of 566,814)	25.1% (10,243 out of 40,810)

(REACH Healthcare Foundation Regional Health Assessment Report, in conjunction with MARC)
<http://www.marc2.org/healthdata/>

With each day that passes, uninsured Latinos are left to navigate a complex system and cannot afford their care. Many come to El Centro to meet with our Health Navigators, Enrollment Specialists, Promotoras de Salud and Medicaid Ambassadors to apply for insurance. That is what Virginia and her daughter Eva came in for at the start of this year, looking for options.

Virginia recently moved in with her daughter. She works, earning about \$1,200 a month and is luckily insured. She needed guidance though, as her insurance plans switched and her specialists were no longer in-network. Virginia asked about Medicaid, as she was covered by Medicaid before in another state. In Kansas, she is only eligible **IF** she is: older than 65 years old (no), or had a disability (no), or was a parent or caregiver and earned very little (no).

Eva has three kids who do have coverage through KanCare. She works part-time, earning about \$1,000 a month. She barely covers household expenses and yet cannot get insurance through her job or afford private insurance. She **is** an adult parent of minors; however, she is *over-income* to qualify for KanCare. For her now family of 5, she would have to make **only** \$816-\$956 a month. "My rent is that much though," Eva said.

The guidelines need to be adjusted for working families like Eva and her mother. KanCare expansion will help Latino families not only address the barrier of being uninsured, it will help them address several barriers that limit their access to life-saving and life-changing care. Expanding KanCare will ultimately improve health outcomes for the more the 150,000 uninsured Latinos and others in Kansas.

~Justin Gust, BSW
Health Navigation Program Manager

