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Kids' health is a mixed bag

They get their shots, but many are poor, fat, uninsured

Jean Fisher, Staff Writer

North Carolina still has a long way to go to improve the health of its children, child and health advocates report today. Despite progress in key areas, such as covering more children through public health insurance, rising numbers of children live in poverty, kids are getting fatter, and deaths from abuse are up.

It's not for lack of awareness of the problems or even a failure to address them, according to the authors of the 2006 N.C. Child Health Report Card.

"For virtually all of the indicators there is at least one initiative -- that's nice to see," said Tom Vitaglione, a report author and senior fellow of health and safety with Action for Children. "We just have not found the right level of investment."

The good news for North Carolina's kids:

MORE HAVE PUBLIC INSURANCE. About 841,000 children had coverage through either Medicaid or N.C. Health Choice in 2005, up about 45 percent from 2000.

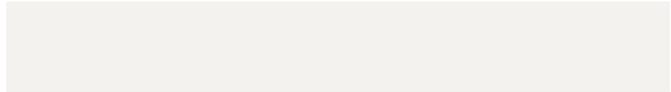THEY'RE GETTING THEIR SHOTS.

CHILD HEALTH REPORT CARD
To read the full report visit:

www.ncchild.org or www.nciom.org

Related Content
- N.C. Child Health Report Card

The state continues to have one of the highest child immunization rates in the country.

FEWER SMOKE. About 20 percent of children in grades 9-12 used cigarettes in 2005, down from nearly 28 percent in 2000.

And the bad:

MORE LIVE IN POVERTY. About 21 percent of children were poor in 2005; 19 percent in 2000.

MORE OVERALL ARE UNINSURED. The total number of uninsured children increased nearly 18 percent between 2000 and 2005.

THEY'RE PACKING ON THE POUNDS. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of children who are overweight increased nearly 20 percent among those aged 2 to 4 and 19 percent among children 5 to 11. One in four 5- to 11-year-olds is considered overweight.

MORE DIE VIOLENTLY. Deaths from child abuse and firearms are up.

Staff writer Jean Fisher can be reached at 829-4753 or jfisher@newsobserver.com.