

Groups help kids obtain insurance

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS) — Through community education events, training of nurses and social workers, and direct assistance with applications, Catholic organizations helped more than 108,000 children enroll in health-care coverage through Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program in 2002, according to a new report.

Children's Health Matters, a partnership between Catholic Charities USA and Catholic health facilities, issued its annual report July 8; the report includes state-by-state data and focuses on enrollment and advocacy efforts in 2002.

Since the partnership began in 1997, more than 393,000 families have been assisted in completing applications for Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP, resulting in 231,355 children enrolled.

"Despite our progress in enrolling children, much more work still needs to be done," said Joeann Karibo, director of community commitment for Bon Secours Health System and

chairwoman of the Children's Health Matters steering committee.

"Currently, there are 8 million uninsured children in this country and over 75 percent of them are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP," she said. "In addition, thousands of children are at risk of losing their coverage as states consider changes or cuts to the Medicaid and SCHIP programs to balance their budgets."

The annual report said approximately 328,000 applications, brochures and promotional materials had been distributed by Children's Health Matters participants in 2002 and some 2,500 community education campaigns held at health fairs, parish events, school meetings and other local gatherings.

St. Anthony Hospital of Chicago, for example, provided children's health-insurance information at local Catholic and public schools, with bilingual outreach workers distributing applications during report card pick-up days to reach all parents.

In Lincoln, Neb., St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center trains local



File photo

An uninsured child receives a medical checkup on June 27, 2002, at Mercy Outreach Center in Rochester. Catholic organizations have helped 108,000 children enroll in health-care coverage.

day-care providers and parish nurses on how to reach out and educate parents about the Medicaid enrollment process.

Throughout the country, Children's Health Matters partners trained 1,740 individuals in 2002 to assist families with completing Medicaid and SCHIP applications at more than 220 training sessions for nurses, social workers and outreach staff within and outside of Catholic

health facilities.

In addition to Catholic Charities USA, sponsors of Children's Health Matters include the Catholic Health Association; Ascension Health of St. Louis; Bon Secours Health System of Marriottsville, Md.; Carondelet Health System of St. Louis; Catholic Health East of Newtown Square, Pa.; Catholic Health Initiatives of Denver; and Catholic Healthcare Partners of Cincinnati.

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VICTIM SETTLE

CHICAGO (CNS) — A former victim of a Chicago police officer's sexual abuse has received a \$4.015 million settlement from the Archdiocese of Chicago. The settlement is based on a lawsuit filed by the victim, Barbara Blum, a survivor of sexual abuse by a priest who was sentenced to prison for 10 years in 1998 and received a pardon from the Illinois State Board of Prison Administration in 2001. The settlement is the largest in the history of the archdiocese's efforts to settle such claims.

Just

Rob Cullivan

Officials in Rochester say that a New York Court Justice's temporary ruling would have a significant impact on Rochester's schools. On July 15, the City of Rochester announced that it would meet with the state's Attorney General, Lunn, who is a proponent of the order. The order would require the state to fund renovations of the paraprofessionals' program. "We are disappointed," said a group of observers. "Yet another obstacle has been placed in the way of our parishioners in the neighborhood." The order is a setback for the City of Rochester and its Commission on Education, a decision to