

2018 Health First Colorado and CHP+ Enrollment Analysis

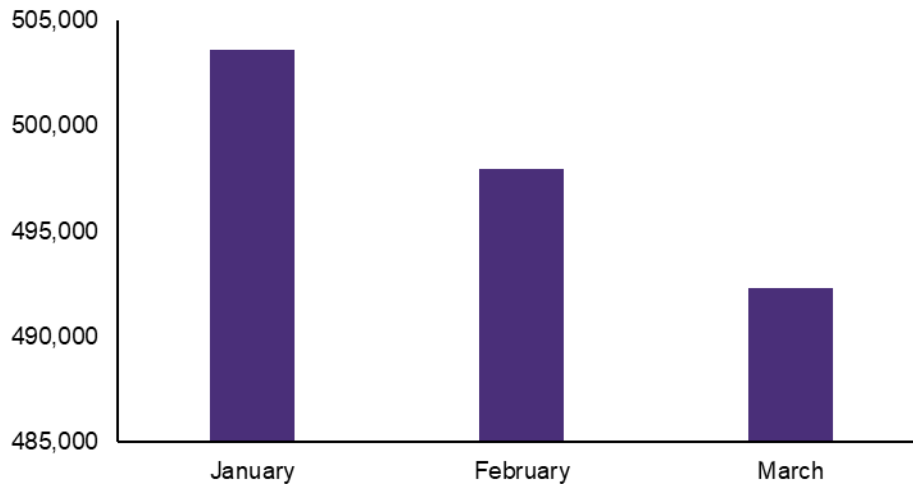


Colorado Covering Kids and Families

This series of reports analyzes children's enrollment changes in Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) and Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) and identifies factors that may have contributed to an increase or decrease in enrollment. The data source used is the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing's [Premiums, Expenditures and Caseload Reports](#). Previous enrollment analyses can be found at ckf.cchn.org/quarterly-enrollment-reports.

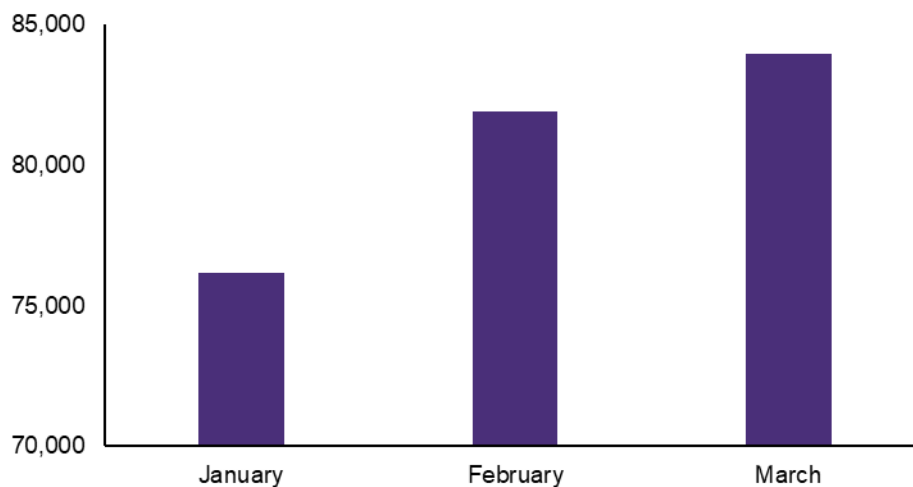
2018 Q1 Enrollment Trends

Health First Colorado Children's Caseload



The total number of children enrolled in Health First Colorado (excluding children in foster care) decreased by **13,443**, or two percent, during the first quarter of 2018. The decline was evenly distributed over each month of the quarter. At the end of March 2018, **492,318** children were enrolled in Health First Colorado.

CHP+ Children's Caseload

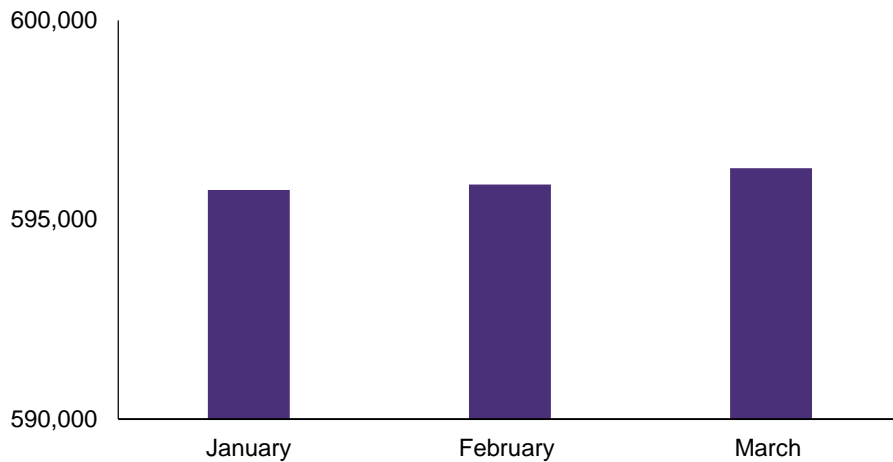


The total number of children enrolled in CHP+ increased by **7,830**, or ten percent, between January and March of 2018. The majority of the CHP+ caseload increase occurred between January and

February, when the caseload increased by seven percent, a total of **5,762** children. This was the second month with substantial CHP+ caseload growth; between December 2017 and January 2018 CHP+ caseload grew by **14,317** enrollments. As of March 2018, **83,981** children are enrolled in CHP+.

The growth in CHP+ enrollment indicates that some of the children who lost coverage through Health First Colorado during the first quarter of 2018 may have moved to CHP+ coverage due to higher family incomes. However, **3,453**, or 31 percent, of the children that lost Health First Colorado coverage did not enroll in CHP+.

Health First Colorado Adult Caseload



The number of non-disabled adults (MAGI adults plus parent and caretaker relatives) enrolled in Health First Colorado caseload increased slightly by a total of **546** from January to March.

What Impacted Enrollment in Q1 2018?

Enrollment trends in the first quarter of 2018 were likely shaped by the system changes and policies that impacted the Health First Colorado and CHP+ in 2017. In March 2017, The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) made updates to its process for verifying income through their interface using employment data from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE). Both the adult Health First Colorado and children’s Health First Colorado caseloads experienced significant decreases by the end of the 2017, which suggests that families that were enrolled in Health First Colorado experienced difficulties responding to the verification requests to retain health coverage. CKF predicted that the Health First Colorado caseloads would steadily increase in 2018, and this was true for the adult Health First Colorado caseload in the first quarter of 2018. The children’s Health First Colorado caseload has continued to decline, however.

The current federal administration’s immigration reform efforts may also be connected to the decrease in the children’s Health First Colorado caseload. CKF’s network of community-based organizations have reported that immigrant parents are concerned about sharing identifying information about their lawfully present and citizen children in order for them to receive Health First Colorado or CHP+ coverage. In addition, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is expected to propose changes to the definition of [Public Charge](#) soon. A [leaked draft](#) of the proposed rule was published by Vox in

February 2018. Because of the increased scrutiny on immigrants, fewer families may be enrolling or acting to stay enrolled in Health First Colorado.

In addition, some of the children who have disenrolled from Health First Colorado may no longer be eligible for the program because of increased family income. Colorado's unemployment rate is low, and this could mean that families are making more money which would disqualify them for Health First Colorado. The steady increase in the CHP+ caseload may support this possibility, but does not correspond perfectly with the decline of the children's Health First Colorado caseload. The steady increase in the CHP+ caseload may also be connected to the federal reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in January 2018. Now that the federal government has reauthorized CHIP for the next ten years, families may feel more comfortable enrolling their children into the CHP+ program.

Looking Forward

If the proposed regulation on public charge is published, it may cause a decline in the Health First Colorado and CHP+ caseloads during the second quarter of 2018. The uncertainty surrounding the current political climate, may cause immigrants to be cautious about enrolling in public benefits regardless of whether the public charge regulation is finalized. This overarching concern may impact enrollment amongst immigrants and their families throughout the year. This impact on enrollment may be partially offset by former Health First Colorado and CHP+ members reenrolling in coverage after experiencing issues with verifying their income in 2017. CKF will continue to monitor the draft regulation on public charge, and its impact on enrollment in Colorado.

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