March 15, 2010

News Release

For Immediate Release

Cover the Uninsured Week: A Local Perspective

In 2009, nearly 47 million Americans were uninsured and more than 9 million of those were children. In Greene County, it was reported in 2007 that almost 37,000 individuals were uninsured. That number continues to rise with each year. These individuals are hard working people including your friends, co-workers, neighbors, and our family. More than 8 out of 10 people that are uninsured come from working families. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has declared the week of March 14-20, 2010, Cover the Uninsured week.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation only 50% of employers offer health insurance to their employees. And, as the economy continues to force people into unemployment, more and more Missourians find themselves without health insurance for themselves and their families.

The consequences of uninsurance are great. Here is why health insurance coverage matters:

- Uninsured Missourians are less likely to have a usual source of care outside of the Emergency Room;
- Uninsured Missourians often go without screenings or preventive care and are more likely to be diagnosed with a condition that has already reached an advanced stage;
- Uninsured Missourians often delay or forgo needed medical care;
- Uninsured Missourians are sicker and die earlier than those who have insurance, making uninsurance the third leading cause of death for the near-elderly; and
- Uninsured Missourians pay more for medical care and have worse health care outcomes.

The Springfield-Greene County Regional Health Commission is working to increase awareness about the issue of the uninsured, amplify diverse voices on behalf of the uninsured and develop innovative solutions for our community. The mission of the organization is to assist in building community partnerships to promote affordable quality health care for the underserved. Throughout this week, information will be forthcoming regarding these local efforts. Please see attached article for more information.

For more information contact:
Katie Towns-Jeter MPH
Public Information Administrator
417-874-1205