

# Report says county youth OK in health care

By Joel Gallob  
Of the News-Times

5034

A new report by Children First for Oregon indicates that the children of Lincoln County do not fare worse than most others around the state in having health care insurance, living in poverty, or having to share physicians with an excessive number of others.

The report, which was produced jointly by Children First and the Northwest Health Foundation and sponsored by the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, placed Lincoln County in the better categories on all those health indicators for its young people.

The study found that 20 percent of all children under 18 years old in Lincoln County had

no "medical encounters" with a doctor or dentist. For Benton County, that figure was 18 percent; for Lane, 21 percent, and for Linn County, 20 percent.

The three Portland metropolitan area counties fared worse than Lincoln County in this key child health care indicator. For Multnomah County, that percentage was 21, for Clackamas, 25 and for Washington, 25 percent.

Benton was joined by a few other counties in having the lowest percent of kids who had never seen a doctor or dentist, at 18 percent. Lake County was the worst, at 31 percent.

Lincoln County was one of the four counties with the next-to-lowest percentage of insured children, according to the report. Marion County had the lowest such percentage, at 5 percent;

Lincoln County was matched by Benton, Lane and Douglas counties in having just 6 percent of its youngsters without medical insurance.

Child poverty in Lincoln County, the study found, totaled 14 percent, putting it in the top 10 for low child poverty rates. That figure was worse than the three Portland-area counties of Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas, each of which had a 9 percent child poverty rate. And it was worse than Yamhill, Polk and Marion, which showed a 10 percent rate.

But the rate in Lincoln County was tied with that in seven other counties, and better than that in the rest of Oregon's 36 counties.

According to the study, Lincoln County had less than 930 residents per primary care physicians. That put it, along

with Benton, Multnomah, Clackamas and Hood River counties, in the best category, from the point of view of the patient. According to the study, three counties - Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler in eastern Oregon - have no primary care physicians, and seven have between 1,378 to 5,187 patients per primary care doctor.

But Lincoln County did not fare well in all the health indicators.

It ranked roughly in the middle of the 36 counties in the percentage of students whose primary language is not English. And it was one of five counties (along with Douglas, Crook, Tillamook and Columbia), where the highest percentages of students - 9 to 18 percent - reported a high level of family mobility.

1  
1  
1  
6  
2  
0  
0  
1