

Public Health Insurance Enrollment in Wake County

June 2002 - June 2004

A report on the number of children applying for and receiving
Medicaid and NC Health Choice.

The following charts summarize the results of the most recent two years of efforts to provide more low-income children with better access to health care through enrollment in Health Check (Medicaid) and NC Health Choice – public health insurance programs for children in households earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level. Three years ago it was estimated that several thousand of the 160,000 children in Wake County were eligible for this coverage but were not enrolled.

Convinced that insurance is a critical influence on access to quality health care, two three-year grants worth more than \$1,750,000 were funded to improve the situation.

Since those projects began the enrollment growth of more than 8,000 children in Wake County has surpassed goals. Wake County has a higher growth rate than many, if not all, North Carolina counties we have monitored.

Reenrollment rates have shown improvement, but only with labor-intensive effort. In NC Health Choice our reenrollment rate of 70% is within 2% of all comparison counties. Well-child participation rates in Wake County remain higher than that of the state, but have shown to be vulnerable to policy emphasis from the state level.

Productive changes in the enrollment process to make it simpler and more accessible to families and more efficient for the people who process applications have been innovated by the Children's Access Program. Some of these process improvements have been adopted by agencies in the county and will continue to benefit the enrollment process.

Building on this success, the John Rex Endowment is reinvesting in enrollment (see July NEWS on new grants) and encouraging new proposals to emphasize:

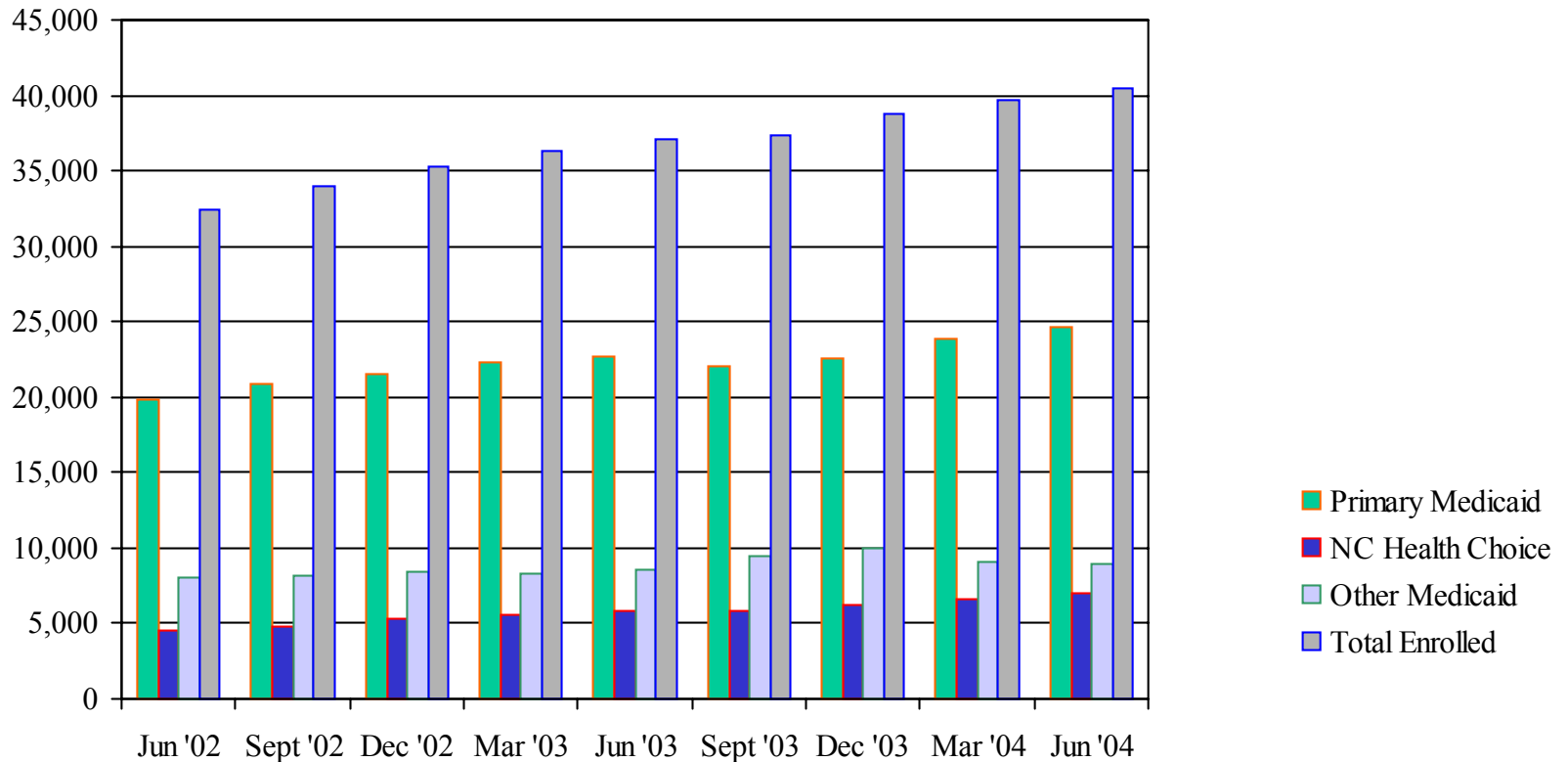
- Enrollment collaborations with medical offices and other child service providers
- Other targeted enrollment strategies that have not been tried in Wake County
- Investigation of reenrollment strategies that connect provider/enrollee incentives to activity
- Improved understanding of how enrollment is influencing access

Children Covered by Public Health Insurance

An additional 8,026 Wake County children were enrolled between June 2002 and June 2004 – a 25% increase.

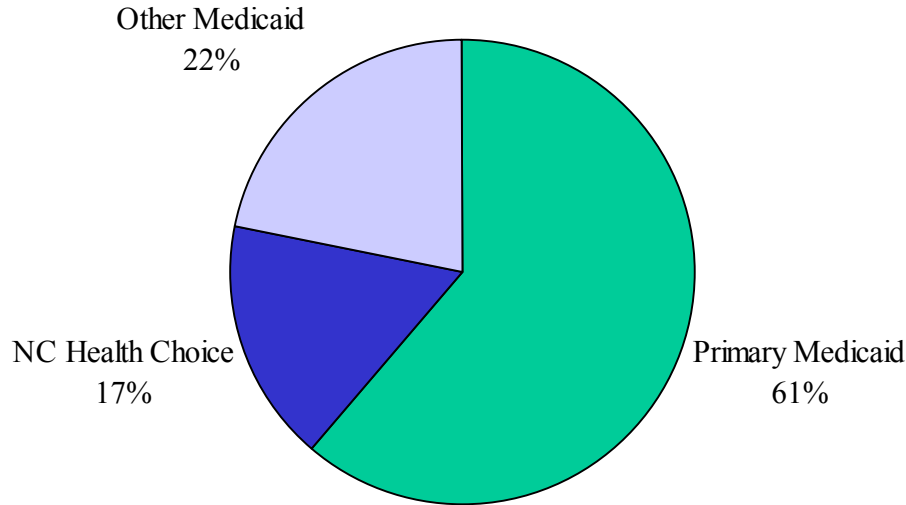
NC Health Choice grew by more than twice that rate from 4,541 children to 6,977.

During the most recent year enrollment has grown an average of 850 children each quarter.



Children Covered by Public Health Insurance

More than 40,000 Wake County children currently have public health insurance. NC Health Choice children (those living in households from 100 to 200 percent of poverty) who now account for 1 in 6, were 13% of those covered by public health insurance. Even two years ago the number of primary Medicaid and “Other” enrollees have grown, but not at such a rapid rate.



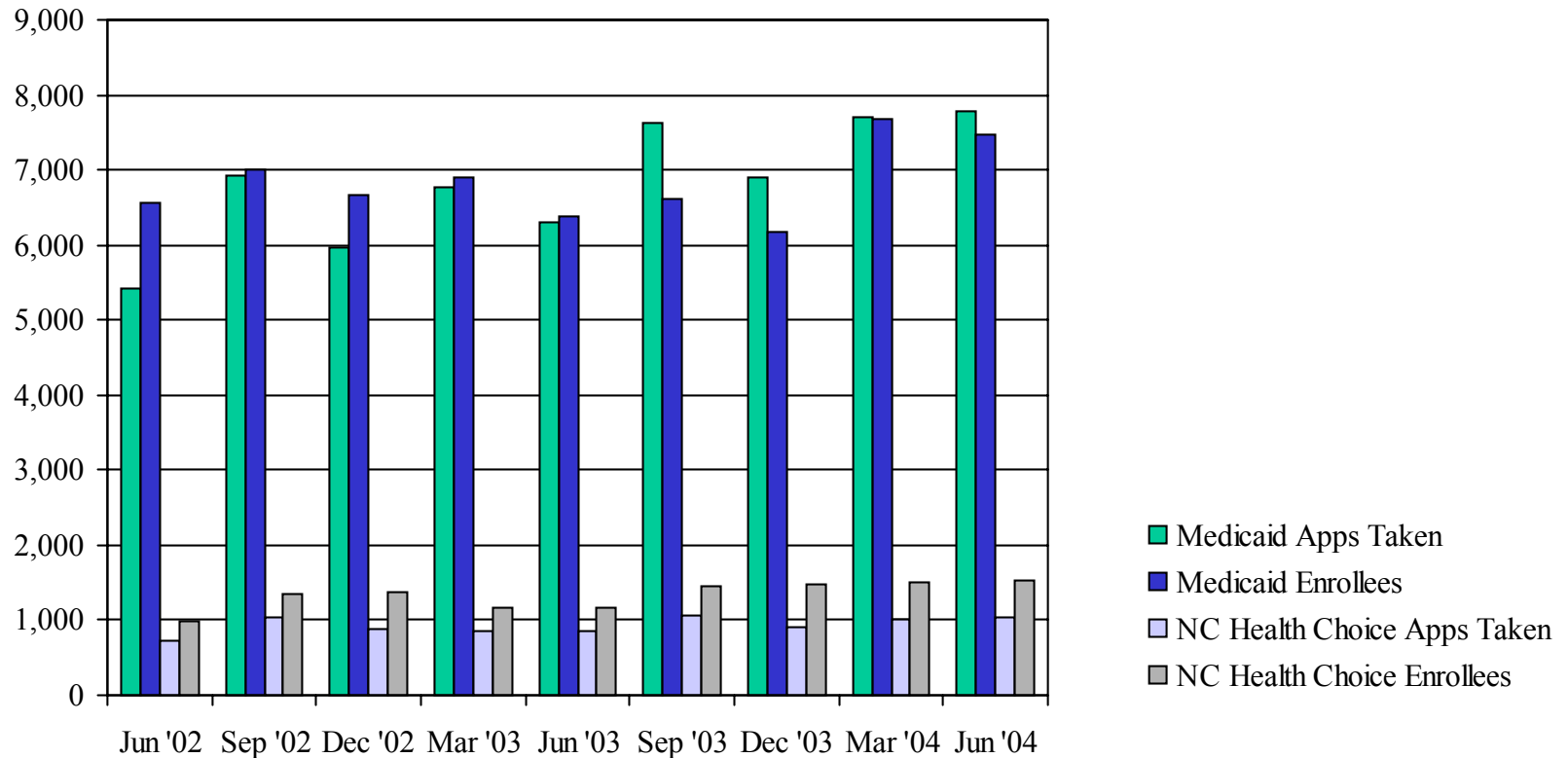
New Enrollees in Public Health Insurance

The number of new children enrolled in NC Health Choice and Medicaid each quarter rose to 8,000 in 2002, then tapered off to the 7,600 range.

In the first six months of this year more than 18,000 new enrollees were added.

Studies show that many Health Choice enrollees had previously had Medicaid coverage.

Many “new” Medicaid enrollees have been covered in the past but lost coverage and reapplied.



Medicaid Preventive Care

Preventive care is an opportunity for early detection and treatment. Well-child participation rates in Wake County remain higher than state rates, but have been vulnerable to policy changes.

This year the 3 and 4 year olds who received screenings dropped significantly and nearly 7,000 of all eligible children did not receive recommended screening.

	2000 / 2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Participation Ratio	70.4	75.4	72.4
# of eligibles who should receive at least 1 initial or periodic screening	19,344	21,916	24,473
# of eligibles receiving at least 1 initial or periodic screening	13,615	16,524	17,719