

# 2026's Best & Worst States For Children's Health Care

Keeping children healthy is both essential and costly. Fortunately, about 94% of children ages 0 to 18 have health insurance coverage to protect them when they become ill. However, high coverage rates have not necessarily reduced health care expenses for families. On average, workers contribute \$6,850 per year toward employer-sponsored family health coverage. While some families receive assistance through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), many who do not qualify for government support continue to face financial strain especially amid significant inflation.

Cost, however, is not the only factor influencing children's health care. The quality of the health care system and environmental conditions such as access to nutritious food and fluoridated water also play significant roles.

Because conditions vary widely by location, WalletHub analyzed the 50 states and the District of Columbia using 33 key indicators related to the cost, quality, and access to children's health care. The data set includes measures ranging from the percentage of children ages 0 to 17 in excellent or very good health to the number of pediatricians and family doctors per capita.

chip lupo  
*"The quality of children's health care should be one of the most important considerations for parents when deciding where to live. Having access to quality pediatric and dental care, nutritious food and good spaces for recreation from a young age can give children a much better chance of growing up healthy and forming good habits that will last into their adult life."*

Chip Lupo, WalletHub Analyst

## Best States For Children's Health Care

State	Score
1. Massachusetts.....	67.34
2. Rhode Island.....	61.77
3. Connecticut.....	60.91
4. Vermont.....	60.90
5. Hawaii.....	60.74
6. New Jersey.....	60.32
7. Pennsylvania.....	58.17
8. New York.....	57.41
9. Iowa.....	57.01
10. California.....	56.25
11. New Hampshire.....	55.89
12. Minnesota.....	55.57
13. District of Columbia.....	55.48
14. Oregon.....	55.02
15. Delaware.....	55.00

## 23. Illinois..... 51.85

### Worst States For Children's Health Care

37. Nevada.....	46.51
38. Alabama.....	45.26
39. South Carolina.....	45.13
40. Louisiana.....	45.11
41. Missouri.....	45.07
42. Arkansas.....	45.02
43. Oklahoma.....	44.72
44. Texas.....	44.63
45. Georgia.....	44.59
46. Wyoming.....	44.09
47. Kentucky.....	43.98
48. Montana.....	42.91
49. Alaska.....	42.20
50. Arizona.....	41.36
51. Mississippi.....	37.69

### Best vs. Worst

♦ Massachusetts has the lowest share of uninsured children aged 0 to 18, which is 7.5 times lower than in Texas, the highest.

♦ Hawaii has the lowest share of children aged 0 to 17 with unaffordable medical bills, which is 2.6 times lower than in Wyoming, the highest.

♦ The District of Columbia has the most pediatricians per 100,000

residents, which is 29 times more than in Louisiana, the fewest.

♦ Colorado have the lowest share of obese children aged 10 to 17, which is 2.4 times lower than in Mississippi, the highest.

## Detention Centers

(From Lacon Front Page)

Welch has previously said the bill will not retroactively apply to the Broadview detention facility.

Minority Floor Leader Patrick Windhorst, R-Harrisburg, cited California legislation attempting to ban federal detention facilities that brought constitutional challenges, questioning if the bill would invite similar scrutiny.

Welch said there are major differences between the California ban and his bill, which only restricts facilities from operating if they are within 1,500 feet of schools, daycares, parks, churches, public housing and private residences.

Despite the clarification, Windhorst said the bill would push the state further in the direction of fighting the federal government. He called on members to vote against passing it.

"We need to take a hard look at what we're doing as a state to make sure we're fulfilling our obligations to protect our citizens and to enforce the laws, including the federal laws of our country," Windhorst said.

Welch said Windhorst had it backward.

"The federal government is picking a fight with us. We have states rights. We know our rights. We know our power," Welch said.

Despite criticism, the bill passed 72-32.

## Marshall County Board

(From Lacon Front Page)

signs throughout the county, the highway department did assist with the installation. The assistance is often given as many of the road commissioners and townships do not have the time or equipment to act quickly. This assistance is coordinated through intergovernmental agreements.

McGlasson summed up his portion of the discussion by saying that the situation is being resolved.

Brad Lindstrom added to the conversation saying that as this is on a township road, the county does not have authority to do anything, but rather in this case, authority falls on Steuben Township.

In other business, the board approved the appointment of Kevin Cook to the Toluca Community Surface Water Protection District. Cook will be replacing Clifford McGrath with a term ending in April of 2028. Roger Perdew was re-appointed as trustee to the Henry

Fire Protection District for a three year term to end in May of 2029.

Other re-appointments included David Todd, Brenda Johnson, Joe McCall and Kimberlee Paszko to the Varna Fire Protection District. Each is a three year term ending May 2029

Gary Schoepke was re-appointed to a three year term to the Lacon-Sparland Fire Protection District through May 2029 and David Dollinger and John Ehrnthaller were appointed to the Toluca-Rutland Fire Protection District, also for three year terms ending in May 2029.

The county board also approved the re-appointment of Karl Ziegler to the Marshall-Putnam River Conservancy District. This appointment is for a five year term, ending in May of 20231.

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"Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes."

- Jim Carrey

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## Marshall County Poor Farm Cemetery

The County Poor Farm operated from 1857 to 1942 on an 80-acre parcel in Section 16 of Steuben Township. It is bounded on the south by County Road 650N / Gimlet Creek Road and it is transected by County Road 875E. It is located on the north side of County Road 650E, one mile east of Yankee Lane or one-quarter mile west of County Road 875E.

In the days prior to a statewide welfare system, those who were marginalized and identified as "needy, homeless or those with mental illness", were sent to the County Poor Farm to live and work. Illinois county poor farms were largely phased out after the Social Security Act of 1935 and the shift to a statewide welfare system in 1932. Many were converted into nursing homes, repurposed as county offices, or closed and sold for private development, though some sites now have a remaining cemetery or are preserved as historical areas.

Extensive documentation exists for the Marshall County Poor Farm in records at the Marshall County Courthouse, since the County operated it, the Marshall County Historical Society, and the archives of surrounding newspapers. The Marshall County Historical Society has documents that share and describe the life of the 'inmates' as they were referred to and the operation of the farm. This document will focus on the Marshall County Poor Farm Cemetery.

Many lived out their life at the County Poor Farm and died there. The so called "Potter's Field" located in the southwest corner of the 80-acre Poor Farm is the resting place for more than two dozen residents and other marginalized people. One of these people is S.W. Stewart who was unjustly lynched at Hall Cemetery east of Lacon in 1898.

### The Find-A-Grave database includes the names of the people known to be buried at the Marshall County Poor Farm:

Sarah Bemis .....	1831 - 25 Oct 1903
Stephen Podnoske .....	1853 - 18 Dec 1904
Joseph Farr .....	1861 - 9 Jun 1883
Marie Pond .....	? - 30 Jul 1914
Robert Griggs.....	? - Dec 1881
Francis Thomas.....	1833 - 18 Nov 1908
Jacob Hepp .....	1870 - 25 Jan 1943
Mandy Way .....	Aug 1848 - 8 Nov 1915
Peter Kauntzman .....	? - 9 Jan 1884
S. W. Stewart.....	? - 1898
Samuel Maurer .....	1856 - 15 Mar 1915 and others.
Fred Mier.....	11 Nov 1872 - 7 Feb 1941
Steve Moreland .....	? - 1915

The Marshall County Board sold the property in 1943. It is not clear whether the Board intended to exclude the cemetery from its auction. Currently, the cemetery is a grassy area in a farm field. Fifty to sixty years ago, the fence and border for the cemetery was removed. Now, farm equipment passes over it, lifting tillage equipment when driving over it. Grave markers and stones have been knocked over, shifted and pressed into the soil.

The people buried at the Marshall County Poor Farm are barely remembered now in their final resting place, marginalized now as they were in life. S. W. Stewart's grave makes this cemetery a significant historic site.

Mr. Stewart was a person of color who was killed by lynching after being taken from a holding cell at the Marshall County Jail. He was accused but never tried or convicted. His name is reported with several spellings including George Stewart or S.W. Stewart or F. W. Stewart. In a recent article in the Peoria Community Word by Pam Adams, there were several points that were consistent among brief accounts picked by newspapers around the country. It is reported that at least 100 men from Toluca broke into the Marshall County Jail in Lacon, where he was taken after being accused of hitting Mary O'Brien of Toluca with a stone. When the County Sheriff refused to turn him over to the mob, they broke down the door and dragged Stewart from the cell. He was taken to Hall Cemetery, disrobed and was found hanging from a low limb tree. A coroner's jury later ruled he died by strangulation 'at the hands of persons unknown' on November 7, 1898. The Peoria paper on November 9, 1898 reported "the body of Sam Stewart, ...., was buried at county expense in the potter's field at the county farm cemetery in Marshall County".

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery Alabama, a project of the Equal Justice Initiative, is focused on both the history and ongoing issue of racial terror lynching. Their Community Remembrance Project supports efforts to locally memorialize documented victims of racial violence and to educate communities about the history of racial injustice. The Marshall County lynching of S.W. Stewart is identified in the Equal Justice Initiative's narrative report, Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror (refer to <https://eji.org/wp-content/uploads/2005/11/lynching-in-america-supplement-by-county-11-2024.pdf>).

We want to call attention to this cemetery, its history and significance, so as to protect and preserve what can be considered 'sacred' land and not allow encroachment by further farming or construction. The Illinois State Human Skeletal Remains Protection Act (20 ILCS 3440/) applies to this site as 'unregistered graves where a human body has been buried or deposited, is over 100 years old, and not included in other State oversight. The Act also defines any means of 'Disturbing' such site to include excavating, removing, exposing, defacing, mutilating, destroying or desecrating in any way the unregistered graves and grave markers.

Spanish philosopher George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".

**Marshall County Peacemakers**  
 April 2026