

November 15, 2004

Dear Representative and Senator:

We are writing to impress on you the urgency that Congress must restore nearly \$1.1 billion in State Children's Health Insurance (SCHIP) funds before adjourning for the year. These funds reverted to the Federal Treasury at the end of the 2004 fiscal year on September 30th.

It is essential to restore these funds to the SCHIP program to maintain health insurance coverage of children in low-income working families. SCHIP currently serves nearly 6 million children, but the success in continuing to cover these children is threatened. It is estimated that more than 200,000 children could lose their health coverage by 2007 if these funds are not restored. Estimates further show that in 2005 six states are likely to have insufficient SCHIP funding to cover all of the children enrolled in their programs and by fiscal year 2007 as many as 18 states would face SCHIP funding shortfalls.

As organizations committed to children's health coverage we commend the bipartisan attention that is being directed at millions of uninsured children who are currently eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP but unenrolled. As negotiations move forward on legislation to restore the expired SCHIP funds, we urge that the key principles set out in the Children's Health Protection Improvement Act (S.2759/ H.R. 4936), bipartisan bicameral legislation that was introduced by Senators Rockefeller, Chafee, Snowe, Kennedy, and Representatives Dingell and Barton, be maintained. This legislation would ensure that all SCHIP funding remains in the program over the next three years until the program is reauthorized in 2007. Most importantly, we urge that the SCHIP funds be directed towards maintaining coverage.

We commend the continued bipartisan effort on this critical child health issue. We urge Congress to act to restore expiring SCHIP funds in the lame duck session to ensure continued success in this critical program for low-income children and families.

For more information, please contact Gregg Haifley at the Children's Defense Fund (202-662-3541), Edwin Park at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (510-835-2718), Lena O'Rourke at Families USA (202-628-3030) or Jennifer Michael at the American Academy of Pediatrics (202-347-8600 ext. 3002).

Sincerely,

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)  
Alan Guttmacher Institute  
Alliance for Children and Families  
Ambulatory Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association on Mental Retardation  
American Dental Hygienists' Association  
American Friends Service Committee  
American Pediatric Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
AMERIGROUP  
Association for Community Affiliated Plans  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Ascension Health  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Catholic Charities USA  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
Center for Adolescent Health & the Law  
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.  
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities  
Child Care Law Center  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Law Center  
Church Women United  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Disability Service Providers of America  
Easter Seals  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Families USA  
Family Violence Prevention Fund  
Family Voices  
First Candle / Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Alliance  
Generations United  
HIV Medicine Association  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Justice Policy Institute  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
National Association for Home Care & Hospice  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems  
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems  
National Association of School Psychology  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors  
National Council of La Raza  
National Health Law Program

National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Mental Health Association  
National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Practitioners Network For Fathers and Families  
National Respite Coalition  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
North American Council on Adoptable Children  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office  
Rebecca Project for Human Rights

RESULTS

School Social Work Association of America  
Society for Adolescent Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Title II Community AIDS National Network  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United Way of America  
USAction  
Voices for America's Children  
Youth Law Center