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**CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND APPLAUDS THE PASSAGE OF LANDMARK  
HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION**

**STATEMENT BY IRWIN REDLENER, MD, PRESIDENT AND  
CO-FOUNDER OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND SPEAKS TO THE  
HISTORIC EVENT AND CHALLENGES AHEAD**

**(New York) - March 26, 2010** - Children's Health Fund (CHF) strongly supports the reconciliation bill signed by President Barack Obama implementing positive changes and fixes to the health reform bill he signed earlier this week. This second piece of health reform legislation marks an unprecedented effort to make real and positive change for the health and well-being of children in this country.

We believe that access to health care for all is a fundamental right, especially for children. CHF thanks the President and the Members of Congress for their unyielding efforts to pass one of the most important legislative efforts of this generation.

Throughout 2009 and 2010, CHF leadership, doctors and advocates have worked to support this historic passage of legislation that will mandate universal health insurance coverage for children. As a champion of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), we are pleased that the successful program will be continued until 2019 and funded through 2015. Other important and laudable provisions in the legislative package include:

- Private insurance reform provisions such as requiring insurance companies to allow children to stay on their parents' plans until they are 26 years old and banning companies from denying children with pre-existing conditions coverage under their parents' plans;
- Expansions of Medicaid and allowing foster children to remain on Medicaid until they are 26 years old;
- Subsidies to low-income families who do not qualify for Medicaid or CHIP to purchase comprehensive insurance;
- Programs to incentivize and strengthen the use of a medical home model;
- Recognition of pediatric specific benefits and efforts to strengthen access to oral health care for children;
- Additional funding for community health centers; and,
- Increased funding for the National Health Service Corps and other provisions to incentivize the provision of primary care in health professional shortage areas.

While the legislative package signed into law this week is a momentous step in the right direction towards guaranteeing children receive the health care services they need, obstacles will still exist for many underserved children. Issues that will continue to stand between kids and access to care include:

- Transportation barriers;
- Too few primary care doctors;
- A lack of access to specialists, including mental and oral health professionals;
- Financial barriers such as insurance premiums and cost-sharing costs; and,
- Immigration status.

In addition, work remains in health care delivery to ensure that every child has access to health care that is comprehensive, continuous, coordinated, and family-centered – what is called a “medical home.” The medical home can benefit millions of children, but only if supported by public policy and insurance, and implemented by physicians, community health centers and hospitals.

CHF applauds Congress and the President for their great achievement to enable the introduction of universal health care coverage in this country. We will continue to work with the Administration and Congress as we seek to provide universal access to comprehensive health care for all children.

Children's Health Fund is a national non-profit committed to providing comprehensive health care to the nation's most medically underserved children through the development and support of innovative primary care medical programs and the promotion of guaranteed access to appropriate health care for all children.

Irwin Redlener, MD is the President of Children's Health Fund and a Professor at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. Visit CHF's website for a full bio: <http://www.childrenshealthfund.org/about-us/board-of-directors/irwin-redlener-md>

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