



Children's Health Fund

Statement from Children's Health Fund in response to the Health Care Reform Bill that was passed in the House of Representatives on Saturday, November 7

New York, NY (November 10, 2009) – On Saturday, November 7, the House delivered a Health Reform bill that was passed by a vote of 220 to 215 in the House of Representatives. Children's Health Fund (CHF), a national organization that advocates for and provides clinical care to disadvantaged and medically underserved children, today issued a Report Card that graded the child health provisions in the bill.

Statement from Children's Health Fund:

First and foremost, we applaud the House on producing this historic health reform bill which will provide tens of millions of currently uninsured Americans access to secure health insurance coverage. Prior to the release of the current bill, we established six questions with a grading system from A to F that would help us to determine the benefits of the overall bill to children, particularly those of working and low-income families. All of the questions related to the critical issue of children's access to health coverage, taking into account issues of affordability, comprehensiveness of the coverage as well as the continuation of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which has been a successful government safety net for nearly 11 million children. Furthermore, we examined the provisions to expand and strengthen the pediatric workforce and Medicaid reimbursement to primary care physicians.

On whole, we found that more must be done to protect and expand health care for children. As health reform continues to be deliberated in the Senate - and then back to the full Congress - we urge lawmakers to revisit the provisions of the bill that deal with coverage and access for children. The planned expiration of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – the second bill that President Barack Obama signed into law when he reauthorized the program in February 2009 – after 2013 in favor of subsidies to help children enroll in private plans on the Exchange is of grave concern to us. We want lawmakers to ensure that the hard-won gains accomplished by 12 years of the CHIP program do not get weakened as the legislation makes its way to the President's desk. The bill does not provide any safeguards ensuring that coverage for these children will be as good or better. In fact, children currently enrolled in CHIP could be at risk of receiving diminished coverage and potentially may fall through the cracks. We remain concerned about overall affordability of health care coverage for low income families in general, and the integrity of the CHIP programs in particular.

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