

July 14, 2009

Dear Senator/Representative:

Over the last decade, we have made huge gains for children because of the success of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid, which serve as the cornerstone of coverage for one-third of our nation's children. President Obama's decision to make children's coverage a top priority by reauthorizing CHIP on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 was a critical step forward for kids. With your leadership, health reform can build on this progress and finish the job of covering *all* children.

For health care reform to be viewed as a success, it must ensure that everyone has access to high-quality, affordable care — that includes the millions of children who remain uninsured or who can't get the services they need, despite having an insurance card. Despite recent gains, millions of children remain uninsured because they cannot afford coverage or because their families face red-tape barriers when attempting to sign them up. As we move forward on health reform, it is important to keep in mind a central tenet of reform articulated by President Obama at a recent talk in Chicago, Illinois: *"My view is health care reform should be guided by a simple principle: Fix what's broken and build on what works. And that's what we intend to do."* With this goal in mind, we respectfully ask for your consideration of the following four principles:

- **Do No Harm to Children.** Health reform should not turn back the clock on the progress our nation has achieved for children's health coverage. One-third of our nation's children receive their health care through Medicaid and CHIP. Before moving children out of these successful programs, Congress should ensure that children will receive comparable or better benefits, cost-sharing protections, and access to care under any new and untested program. Congress must ensure that children do not lose the benefits and cost-sharing protections they already have under Medicaid and CHIP. If we fail to protect children, we will spend \$1 trillion over ten years but leave roughly 10 million children worse off.
- **Preserve Medicaid.** Medicaid offers a broad benefits package which includes Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) services, an expansive definition of "medical necessity" that promotes children's healthy development, interpretation and translation services, and targeted case management. By providing these services, as well as other guarantee and accountability provisions, Medicaid and CHIP go beyond commercial plans in meeting the unique needs of low-income children and children with special health needs.
- **Insure All Children.** Six million children are eligible but not enrolled in public health coverage. Eliminating red tape and bureaucracy by simplifying enrollment would be the cheapest, quickest and smartest first step toward ensuring that the lowest-income children are covered. Parents should have a hassle-free way to secure coverage for their children through a "No Wrong Door" system that links them to Medicaid, CHIP, or another insurance program, depending on their eligibility criteria.
- **Cover Kids from Head to Toe.** All children need coverage that meets their unique developmental needs, and provides them with the preventive services, medical care, and oral and mental health benefits needed to launch them on a

better trajectory in life. Access to the right care at the right time is an essential element of system reform, and we urge you to ensure that limits on benefits or high cost-sharing will not create barriers to care that children need for healthy development.

We look forward to working with you to build upon the strengths of children's current health care coverage and to make needed reforms to improve quality, access, and affordability of care for children. There are no do-overs for childhood. We must get health reform right the first time by enacting legislation that improves coverage and care for America's children.

Sincerely,

Action for Children North Carolina  
Advocates for Children and Youth (Maryland)  
All Kids Covered Colorado  
Alliance for Children and Families  
Aloha United Way (Hawaii)  
American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Children's Residential Centers  
American Association of School Administrators  
The American Dance Therapy Association  
American Humane Association  
American Pediatric Association  
Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind, Inc.  
The Autism Society of America  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Beckett Family Consulting  
California Children's Hospital Association  
Camp Fire USA  
Center for Adolescent Health & the Law  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Central Region Education Cooperative (New Mexico)  
Child and Family Policy Center (Iowa)  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children Now (California)  
Children's Alliance (Washington)  
Children's Dental Health Project  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.  
Children's HealthWatch  
The Children's Health Fund  
Children's Hospital Association of Texas  
Children's Leadership Council  
The Children's Village (New York)  
Christ Child House (Michigan)  
Citizens for Missouri's Children  
Coalition for Community Schools  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies

Colorado Children's Campaign  
Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino County (California)  
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Covering Kids & Families of Indiana, Inc.  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
DePelchin Children's Center (Texas)  
Easter Seals  
Every Child Matters Education Fund  
Family Connection of Easton, Inc. (Pennsylvania)  
Family Voices  
Family Voices of New Jersey  
Family Voices of North Dakota  
First Focus  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Generations United  
Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Grandchildren Training Project  
Greater Twin Cities United Way  
Healthy Teen Network  
HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska  
Hospital Traveler, Inc.  
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles  
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley  
Kentucky Youth Advocates  
Lafayette Urban Ministry (Indiana)  
LEAnet  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Legislative Coalition of Virginia Nurses  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
Lutheran Social Services of New England  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Maine Equal Justice Partners  
Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Child and Adolescent Health Policy  
Mélange Health Solutions (North Carolina)  
Mental Health America  
Michigan's Children  
Mom's Rising  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School-based Health Centers  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Black Child Development Institute  
National Center for Housing & Child Welfare  
National Collaboration for Youth  
National Council of La Raza  
National Disability Rights Network

National Education Association  
National Foster Care Coalition  
National Head Start Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality  
National Network for Youth  
National PTA  
The National Policy Partnership for Children of Incarcerated Parents (Arkansas)  
Nevada Covering Kids and Families  
New Jersey Alliance for Children, Youth and Families  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center (New York)  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center (Minnesota)  
PICO National Network  
Presbyterian Children's Services (Missouri)  
Public Education Network  
The Rebecca Project for Human Rights  
Roanoke City Public Schools  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
School Social Work Association of America  
Society for Adolescent Medicine  
Southern Oregon Adolescent Study and Treatment Center  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey  
Tennessee Primary Care Association  
The Unity School  
United Neighborhood Centers of America  
United Way of Central Kane County (Illinois)  
United Way of Florida  
United Way of Greater Portland (Maine)  
United Way of Portage County, Inc. (Ohio)  
United Way of Santa Cruz County  
United Way for Southeastern Michigan  
United Ways of Tennessee  
USAction  
Voices for America's Children  
Voices for Ohio's Children  
Voices for Virginia's Children  
WEEL Empowers  
Youth Villages, Inc.  
ZERO TO THREE