



Children's Health Fund

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More Than Five Million Children In Danger of Losing Access to Health Care Insurance

Health Care Reform Repeal Vote Could Hurt 8 Million More Young People Denied Access Through Parents' Insurance, Community Health Center Funding

NEW YORK (Jan. 18, 2011) – Children's Health Fund (CHF) today urged lawmakers to vote against the repeal of health care reform legislation, which would jeopardize the long-term health of millions of children across the nation. CHF estimates that more than 5 million children would lose the promise of insurance coverage under the new health care policy, if a full repeal is successful.

In addition, repeal would end the promise of new health care access for the nearly 7 million children expected to benefit from expanded funding of community health centers, as well as for the 1.2 million young adults who are currently able to remain covered on their parents' health plans.

"This unconscionable proposal to repeal the health care bill could not be worse news for children who desperately need access to health care," said CHF Co-founder and President Irwin Redlener, M.D.

Children who lack regular access to quality care often go without treatment for chronic conditions, like asthma and diabetes, that affect school performance and cause them to miss school at higher rates. Families without access to consistent care instead rely on hospital-based care, flooding the nation's already overstressed emergency rooms.

Many provisions of the bill that improve access for children have already been implemented, including:

- Guaranteed coverage regardless of pre-existing conditions;
- Preventive services at no cost to families; and
- Coverage under parents' health plans into young adulthood.

Under repeal of the health care bill, a child without the ability to afford preventive services may be forced to go without needed vaccinations. A teenager with diabetes could once again be denied coverage. And a young college graduate might be dropped

from his parents' insurance before he is able to secure a job that provides health benefits.

"If repeal is successful, millions of children would lose benefits that have already taken effect and that expand access to the health care they need to thrive," said Redlener. "Loss of access by repeal of this bill can only be interpreted as a broken promise to kids who deserve better from our elected officials."

Repeal would also negate the important provisions scheduled to take effect over the next few years, like new state-based health insurance exchanges and subsidies to help children and families afford coverage.

With the economy not yet fully recovered, a repeal of health care reform would return America to even more dire circumstances than before the new health care bill was passed. In the 10 months since the bill passed, more Americans have lost their health coverage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that 4 million more Americans went without health insurance coverage in the first part of 2010 than during the same period in 2008. That's a total of 59 million people without health insurance for at least part of the last year – the vast many of whom stand to benefit from the changes in health care law.

The Census Bureau has also released startling new figures since the bill's passage. In 2009, one in seven Americans lived in poverty – a number that has likely increased over the last year. Children living in poverty are at greater risk for a multitude of negative health consequences.

"Nearly a year after the passage of health care reform, more Americans have lost their health coverage and more families have fallen into poverty," said Redlener. "The timing of this repeal effort could not be more inopportune and irresponsible."

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Founded in 1987 by singer/songwriter Paul Simon and pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, Children's Health Fund (CHF) is the nation's leading pediatric provider of mobile-based health care for homeless and low-income children and their families. CHF's mission is to bring health care directly to those in need through the development and support of innovative medical programs, response to public health crises, and the promotion of guaranteed access to health care for all children. CHF currently has 50 mobile medical clinics serving hundreds of locations across the country. Over the past 23 years, the organization has supported more than two million health care visits for disadvantaged children, often in places where doctors and health care providers are in short supply. For more information about CHF, visit www.childrenshealthfund.org.