



Children's Health Fund

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***New England Journal of Medicine* Perspective by Irwin Redlener, MD, Addresses Health Care Reform**

Dr. Redlener Applauds Historic Effort but Points out Potential Risk if America's Safety Net Programs Are Lost in Final Health Care Reform

New York, NY (December 3, 2009) The *New England Journal of Medicine* today published a Perspective opinion piece addressing health care reform, co-authored by Irwin Redlener, M.D., president, Children's Health Fund and Director, National Center for Disaster Preparedness and Professor of Clinical Population & Family Health at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health; and, Roy Grant, M.A., of the Children's Health Fund, a national organization that advocates for and develops primary care programs for disadvantaged and medically underserved children.

This expert opinion piece applauds the historic efforts to pass health insurance reform and make health care more available to Americans, but cautions stakeholders to strongly consider the potential consequences of eliminating America's Safety Net programs, currently insuring 100 million people, in the final health care reform legislation. This article also points out that the conditions of poverty, isolation and population disparities which made a "health care safety net" necessary in the first place will remain, regardless of reforms which may be passed into law in the months to come.

"We applaud Congress and the President for their efforts to produce an historic health reform bill which will provide tens of millions of currently uninsured Americans access to secure health insurance coverage," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, M.D., president, CHF. "Nevertheless, with more than 45 million Americans uninsured and many more underinsured, with more than 65 million Americans living in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas, and with many communities lacking sufficient specialty-care services, the existing safety net is simply inadequate — and is continuing to deteriorate and needs to be addressed."

The piece can be read at <http://healthcarereform.nejm.org/?p=2471>

"We need to recognize that the pervasive negative impact of poverty and disparities on the health status of so many communities will not be 'cured' by health insurance reform alone. Preserving and strengthening 'safety net' programs will continue to be a critical need for the foreseeable future," concluded Redlener.

Children's Health Fund (CHF) (www.childrenshealthfund.org) 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. Teams of dedicated medical professionals in CHF's 24 pediatric programs in 15 states and the District of Columbia have brought essential primary care services through more than 2 million patient visits.

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