



**Children's Health Fund**



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## **Congressional Briefing Raises Concerns about Transportation Barriers to Health Care Access for Children**

### ***Three Million Children Annually Miss Health Care Appointments Due to Lack of Transportation***

**WASHINGTON** (June 16) – In order to bring attention to serious transportation barriers that undermine access to children's health care, Children's Health Fund (CHF) and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) are hosting a congressional briefing June 16.

As states begin to connect millions of currently uninsured children and families with health care services through the implementation of health care reform, the availability of transportation to routine medical care remains a major access barrier, particularly in rural areas, where lack of public transportation is significantly associated with not having a usual source of pediatric care.

"Many families living in poverty or in areas with great distances between their home and health care resources face additional hurdles in getting care for their children," said Irwin Redlener, M.D., president and co-founder of CHF. "Without timely access to comprehensive health care, these children face increased risks of lifelong health consequences."

A 2006 national survey conducted by CHF and the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion found that 4 percent of U.S. children, or 3 million children, miss at least one health care visit per year due to transportation barriers.

"Increasingly, successful health care outcomes depend on readily available transportation options that keep patients connected to ongoing therapies, critical care and even routine medical appointments," said CTAA Executive Director Dale J. Marsico, CCTM. "The emergence of our partnership with the Children's Health Fund helps us educate both the health care and transportation networks about this important and growing trend."

"I commend the work of Children's Health Fund and the Community Transportation Association of America," said Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. "Effective collaboration between the health and transportation sectors is essential to ensuring that

children and families from America's medically underserved communities – especially those in rural areas – have access to the health care they need.”

CHF has developed a new tool, the Health Transportation Shortage Index (HTSI), to help health planners identify geographic areas where child health care access may be compromised by inadequate transportation availability. The HTSI assesses the type of community, poverty, transportation and health workforce in pinpointing areas that are adversely affected by lack of transportation resources.

Among the recommendations to be discussed at the event is the need for resources devoted to improving the local health infrastructure in medically underserved areas, along with an improvement in the availability of transportation resources by preserving the non-emergency medical transportation feature of Medicaid.

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### **Children's Health Fund**

Founded in 1987 by singer/songwriter Paul Simon and pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, M.D., 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 24 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](http://www.childrenshealthfund.org).