



Children's
Health Fund



From: **The Children's Health Fund**

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CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND NATIONAL "KIDS CAN'T WAIT" CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN DETROIT

WEEKEND OF FREE HEALTH CARE PLANNED FOR CHILDREN IMPACTED BY THE RECESSION AS CHF BRINGS MOBILE CLINICS FROM ITS NATIONAL PROGRAMS TO DETROIT

Senator Debbie Stabenow, Representative John Dingell, Representative Carolyn Kilpatrick and Children's Hospital of Michigan President, Dr. Herman Gray to join CHF co-founders Paul Simon and Dr. Irwin Redlener

DETROIT (April 24, 2009) – On Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26, the **Children's Health Fund (CHF)**, a national organization that advocates for and provides clinical care to disadvantaged and medically underserved children, will launch *Kids Can't Wait*, a national campaign to bring attention to the devastating impact of the economic crisis on health care access for children.

Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), **Representative John Dingell**, and **Representative Carolyn Kilpatrick** will join CHF co-founders **Dr. Irwin Redlener** and singer/songwriter **Paul Simon**, and Dr. Herman Gray, President of the **DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan**, at Spain Elementary School, 3700 Beaubien St., Detroit, 48201, to support the launch of the campaign with the first of a series of mega children's health care events that will occur in communities nationwide.

"Children's Health Fund is a strong supporter of the Children's Health Insurance Program - or CHIP - that President Obama signed into law earlier this year," Dr. Redlener said. "However, appropriate access to care remains an insurmountable challenge for millions of children who may live in doctor shortage areas or communities lacking affordable transportation. And, millions of other children may be ineligible for the new insurance programs. The deep and persistent recession we're in exacerbates the barriers faced by children who need health care right now."

Dr. Redlener also a Professor at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health continued, "Kids can't wait for the economy to get better to get the health care they need. In fact,

delaying needed health care for a year can mean a lifetime of consequences - and that is why we're here."

Current data show that Metropolitan Detroit has the highest unemployment rate of any large metro area, 14.6 percent. Almost half (48%) of the kids in Detroit City were living in poverty prior to the recession. That means at least 110,000 children - before the recession even began to take hold.

Beyond Detroit, the Kids Can't Wait campaign will call for access to care for all children and in its "weekends of care" across the U.S, CHF and local partner organizations will provide medical and dental care to children whose families can't afford or get to the medical care they need.

"Many families in communities across the country are suffering under hardships resulting from this terrible economic decline, losing jobs, homes and medical care. Children in these families need our help now more than ever," said CHF Co-Founder, Paul Simon.

"In Michigan, thousands of families are worrying, not only about their next paycheck or their mortgage, but how to provide quality, affordable healthcare for their children. Children should not have to suffer because their parents can't afford health insurance or to pay a doctor's bill," said Stabenow. "The work done this weekend, and the resources provided to the mobile health care unit will help protect our children today, and help make strides to ensure a brighter, happier, healthier tomorrow for our state and entire country. I'm proud to stand with the Children's Health Fund to help make this vision a reality."

"In Michigan we're fortunate that all kids who need health insurance can get coverage through the state's MI-Child program, (Michigan's version of S-CHIP) and/or Medicaid. However, having this coverage doesn't necessarily mean children can easily access medical and dental providers. We are supportive of CHF's *Kids Can't Wait* campaign because it will help educate families about how to get their kids covered and link them to providers for the care they need," says Dr. Herman Gray, President of the DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Detroit has long recorded some of the most troubling health care indicators in the country for children. Based on the most recent child health data available, nearly 75 percent of the city's census tracts were considered medically underserved, with a child to health-care provider ratio of 1,117 to 1. Nearly forty (40) percent of young children are behind in their vaccinations.

Mobile clinics from CHF's national network of programs will come from various parts of the country, including New York, Arkansas and Mississippi. In collaboration with the **Children's Hospital of Michigan, CHF/ Kids Can't Wait** has recruited dozens of doctors, health professionals, support staff and volunteers to provide throughout the course of the weekend free pediatric care, health screenings, dental care and other services for children, from infancy to age 18.

In conjunction with this event, the Children's Health Fund will provide a \$100,000 grant to the Children's Hospital of Michigan to support its mobile pediatric health care team and anticipates working with Children's Hospital on longer-term solutions to helping ensure adequate access to pediatric medical care in the community.

The Children's Health Fund's *Kids Can't Wait* campaign is supported in part by American Idol's Idol Gives Back.

List of partners/collaborators – Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, Detroit Department of Health, National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions, Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs

Children's Health Fund (CHF)

Founded in 1987 by pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, and singer/songwriter Paul Simon, the Children's Health Fund (CHF) works nationally to advocate on behalf of all children and to develop health care programs for the most medically under-served population- homeless and disadvantaged children. CHF's 22 pediatric programs and 2 affiliates in 15 states and DC have provided essential primary care services in more than 1.8 million patient visits via mobile medical clinics. For more information about CHF and the Kids Can't Wait campaign visit:

www.childrenshealthfund.org

DMC Children's Hospital of Michigan

Founded more than 120 years ago, the Children's Hospital of Michigan is the first and only hospital in the state dedicated exclusively to the treatment of children. A leader internationally in neurology and neurosurgery, cardiology, oncology, and diagnostic services, it is ranked one of America's best hospitals for children. More Michigan pediatricians are trained at the Children's Hospital of Michigan than in any other facility in the state. Children's Hospital of Michigan is one of nine hospitals operated by the Detroit Medical Center (DMC). The DMC is proud to be the Official Healthcare Services Provider of the Detroit Tigers, Detroit Red Wings, Detroit Pistons and Detroit Shock. For more information about the Children's Hospital of Michigan visit: www.childrensdmc.org.

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