

STATEMENT BY IRWIN REDLENER, MD, PRESIDENT,
CHILDREN'S HEALTH FUND ON PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SIGNING OF
FIRST PIECE OF HEALTH CARE REFORM LEGISLATION

(New York) - March 23, 2010 – Today, President Obama signed into law one of the two pieces of comprehensive health care reform legislation that Congress has been debating and working on for many months. This bill, in combination with the health care legislation currently being debated in the Senate, will make real and positive change for the health and well-being of children in this country.

Throughout 2009 and 2010, CHF leadership, doctors and advocates have worked to support this historic passage of legislation that will mandate universal health insurance coverage for children. The bill signed today includes a number of important provisions for children that are a huge first step in securing universal access to health care for kids across this nation. As a champion of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), we are particularly pleased that under this bill the successful program will continue. Other laudable provisions in the legislation package include:

- Private insurance reform provisions such as requiring insurance companies to allow children to stay on their parent's plans until they are 26 years old and immediately banning companies from denying children with pre-existing conditions coverage under their parent's plans;
- Expansions of Medicaid and allowing foster children to remain on Medicaid until they are 26 years old;
- Subsidies to low-income families who do not qualify for Medicaid or CHIP to purchase comprehensive insurance;
- Programs to incentivize and strengthen the use of a medical home model (model that including comprehensive, continuous health care);
- Recognition of pediatric specific benefits and efforts to strengthen access to oral health care for children;
- Additional funding for community health centers; and,
- Increased funding for the National Health Service Corps and other provisions to incentivize the provision of primary care in health professional shortage areas.

Once the final piece of health reform package is signed into law, CHF will continue to work to address the remaining obstacles to children gaining full access to comprehensive health care.

We strongly encourage Senate passage of the reconciliation bill swiftly this week.

Irwin Redlener, MD is the President of the Children's Health Fund and Professor at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

Children's Health Fund is a national non-profit committed to providing comprehensive health care to the nation's most medically underserved children through the development and support of innovative primary care medical

programs and the promotion of guaranteed access to appropriate health care for all children.

Please visit www.ChildrensHealthFund.org to send a letter thanking your representative for voting for health care reform and encouraging your Senators to vote for its passage.

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