

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 29, 2008

CONTACT: Janice Taylor
323.295.9372 x 221; janice@chc-inc.org

Advocates Kick-Off National Covering Kids & Families Network

Inaugural Meeting of Group to Share Collective Expertise in Advancing Healthcare Coverage

Children and healthcare advocates from across the country gathered in Washington, DC, last week for the inaugural meeting of the National Covering Kids and Families Network. The Network is an outgrowth of a multi-year nationwide initiative, Covering Kids and Families (CKF), previously funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. CKF helped to support the development of coalitions in more than 30 states and usher in the federal SCHIP legislation and healthcare coverage for more than six million children annually. As funding for the national initiative came to an end, several of the previously funded programs came together to form the network in an effort to sustain the advancements made and work towards a national plan for healthcare coverage and equal access to quality healthcare.

“Our vision is to build a national voice for quality health and affordable healthcare for all that reflects the issues and concerns of states across the country,” says Caroline Rivas, Policy Director for Community Health Councils, the lead agency for the network. “While the nation debates various plans for healthcare reform, there are an increasing number of federal restrictions and budget cuts coming out of Washington, DC and state capitols across the country that will push children back into the rolls of the 47 million uninsured in our country. We are determined to ensure our nation protects the health of our children by providing healthcare coverage for every child in every state.”

More than 125 members representing over 70 organizations and 30 states have joined the NCKF Network. Wednesday’s inaugural meeting established the platform for the Network’s work together for the next several years which includes the reauthorization of SCHIP; greater flexibility from the federal CMS, the agency administering SCHIP and Medicaid program, to encourage state healthcare expansion; and simplification of the documentation requirements for children to obtain coverage.

“The network will give advocates the opportunity to share their experience from the ground up,” continues Ms. Rivas. “It brings together experts and leaders from around the country who have the practical experience of working with uninsured children and families and who can translate their real life experience and perceptions into policy. We want to hold onto the advancements that have been made to cover children and to speak with a loud and unified voice outside the DC beltway for affordable, quality healthcare coverage for the more than nine million uninsured children in the country.”

Community Health Councils is a non-profit, community-based health promotion, advocacy and policy organization. Established in 1992, CHC's mission is to improve health and increase access to quality healthcare for uninsured, economically-disadvantaged, and underserved populations.