

News Release



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Passage of Children’s Health Coverage Legislation a Plus for California *SCHIP funding gives State opportunity to expand coverage to all children*

Los Angeles, CA—Children’s advocates are celebrating the signing of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) reauthorization bill by President Obama. Similar bills had been twice vetoed by President Bush.

“The passage of the SCHIP reauthorization is one of the most helpful steps Washington can take to support families during this economic downturn,” says Lark Galloway-Gilliam, executive director of Community Health Councils. “The SCHIP reauthorization and the \$1.5 billion California is expected to receive in the first year would not only allow the State to continue insuring the 900,000 children currently enrolled in our SCHIP program—Healthy Families—but also extend coverage to thousands of uninsured children. It’s time for our State leaders to end the budget gridlock and make sure this money reaches families.”

SCHIP was created in 1997 to reduce the number of uninsured children by providing subsidized insurance to children in families who make too much to qualify for Medicaid but don’t have or can’t afford private insurance. The current bill extends SCHIP until 2013 and is particularly important with workers at all levels losing their jobs and health insurance. More than 7 million children nationwide currently rely on SCHIP for their healthcare coverage. The bill will extend coverage to another 4 million children across the country. In California, nearly 700,000 children lack health coverage, with 227,000 uninsured kids residing in Los Angeles County alone.

Yadira Martinez is one California mother who relies on Healthy Families to afford the critical healthcare her asthmatic eight-year-old son Christopher needs. A working single mother of two, her wages are barely enough to cover rent, utilities and food, and she cannot afford the premiums for the health insurance her employer offers for dependents. Says Yadira, “Programs like Healthy Families are the safety net for single parents struggling to keep their children healthy.”

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.