

May 7, 2012

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations urge you to oppose efforts to remove incentives for states to find and enroll eligible low-income children into Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Recent reports from the National Center for Health Statistics show that an additional 1.2 million children have gained coverage in the last three years because of the enrollment policies contained in the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA). CHIPRA established performance incentives to reward states for demonstrating concrete success in enrolling low-income uninsured children in Medicaid and CHIP. The funding encourages states to take proven steps that simplify Medicaid and CHIP enrollment and renewal procedures.

To date, the incentive payments have worked exactly as intended, rewarding states for tackling the challenge of making sure that the lowest-income children are connected to the coverage for which they are eligible. In December 2010, 16 states received awards. In December 2011, 23 states received awards.

The policies that allow states to qualify for incentive payments have a long-term positive impact on access to coverage and attachment to a medical home for children. They encourage the efficient use of state and federal funds as opposed to policies that cost more than they save (as has been proven by Medicaid and CHIP's history with citizenship documentation policies). To cut the incentive program - which provides critical funding to states that are clearly still experiencing budget crises - is short-sighted. It could imperil the nation's recent success in driving the uninsured rate of children to record lows. Cuts to children's Medicaid and CHIP coverage are also unpopular, as the vast majority of working families - 93% - are satisfied with their child's coverage in these programs.

Medicaid and CHIP are low-cost, efficient ways to provide health coverage and health care to children. Compared to children with insurance, uninsured children are over five times more likely to have an unmet need for medical care; over three times more likely not to get a needed prescription drug; much less likely to receive preventive services including immunizations, dental, and vision care and medical care for conditions such as sore throats, ear infections and asthma; and 30% less likely to receive medical treatment if they are injured.

Connecting the poorest children with affordable health care coverage is the primary goal of the CHIPRA performance incentives. Eliminating them would contradict the objective of making coverage of the poorest children a top priority while at the same time wasting taxpayer dollars by making Medicaid and CHIP less efficient. We urge you to oppose cuts to the CHIPRA incentive program.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
Alliance for a Just Society  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics

American College of Physicians  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Pediatric Society  
American Public Health Association  
Ascension Health  
Association for Community Affiliated Plans  
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Campaign for Better Health Care, Illinois  
Cedar River Group  
Center for Budget and Policy Priorities  
Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska  
Children's Alliance  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Dental Health Project  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Hospital Association  
Children's Partnership  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Colorado School Medicaid Consortium  
Community Catalyst, New England Alliance for Children's Health  
Community Health Network of Washington  
Consumer Action  
Defeat Diabetes Foundation  
Doctors for America  
Doctors for America, Washington state chapter  
Doctors for Global Health  
Easter Seals  
Every Child Matters Education Fund  
Families USA  
Florida CHAIN  
Florida Child Healthcare Coalition  
Health & Disability Advocates  
Health Care for All-Washington  
HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy  
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
International Community Health Services  
League of Women Voters of Washington  
Legal Voice  
Legal Voice in Washington State  
Leyden Area Special Education Cooperative  
March of Dimes  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative  
Medicaid Health Plans of America  
Medicaid in Schools

Mental Health America  
Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network  
National Academies of Practice  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems  
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Physician's Alliance  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
Occupational Training Institute  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
Pennsylvania Health Law Project  
Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans  
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition  
RESULTS  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Seattle Indian Health Board  
SEIU Healthcare 1199NW  
Single Payer Action Network (SPAN) Ohio  
Society for Pediatric Research  
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
Statewide Poverty Action Network  
Temple Beth Am Health Care For All  
Tennessee Health Care Campaign  
Texans Care for Children  
The Children's Movement of Florida  
Utah Health Policy Project  
Vermont Public Interest Research Group  
Voices for America's Children  
Washington Community Action Network  
Washington State Hospital Association  
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
Washington State Nurses Association