



For Immediate Release
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Big Five Proposed Budget is the Single Biggest Cut to Children's Health in History

Healthy Families Cuts Will Cause 785,000 Children to be Denied Access to Health Coverage

SACRAMENTO, California — A statement from Deena Lahn, Policy Director of Children's Defense Fund California:

"The proposed budget deal crafted by the Governor and the heads of the Assembly and Senate shows a colossal failure of leadership that constitutes an irresponsible and cruel blow to California's children's health. With budget cuts to the Healthy Families program expanding to \$144 million, a total of 785,000 children are expected to be denied health coverage, resulting in the single largest health coverage cut to children in our nation's history.

Make no mistake about it - this proposal will result in kids getting sicker and some will die. To reach \$144 million in savings, Healthy Families would need to disenroll 450,000 children and bar 335,000 eligible children from enrolling – for a total of 785,000 affected children.

The Governor and Legislative leaders will single handedly wipe out the gains that have been made nationwide to expand health coverage to children. While at least 13 states in this difficult economic period have expanded coverage and enabled 250,000 more children to have access to care, California is moving in the exact opposite direction that shamefully positions our state as a national disgrace to children's health coverage efforts.

We are extremely disappointed the Big Five did not adopt other viable options to save this vital program. There are other alternatives that would create less suffering for our state's children, such as tapping other revenue sources, temporarily delaying health plan rate increases, reducing administrative vendor costs, or imposing modest, one-time premium increases

To move forward in passing the budget without considering all alternatives demonstrates seriously misplaced priorities and goes against these policymakers' previous commitments to preserve children's health coverage. If the Governor and Legislature continue to move forward on this reckless path, 785,000 kids will suffer the consequences as they go without health coverage.

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If you would like to speak to a representative on behalf of children's health, please call Bobby Peña at 916-440-0980 or call one of the organizational representatives listed below. Contact information on next page

The 100% Campaign, a collaborative effort of The Children's Partnership, Children Now and Children's Defense Fund, was created to ensure that all of California's children obtain the health insurance they need to grow up strong and healthy. www.100percentcampaign.org

The PICO California Project is the united effort of 20 California congregation-community organizations affiliated with the PICO National Network. Collectively, we represent 350 congregations and 400,000 families statewide and are actively organizing in over 70 cities in Northern and Southern California www.picocalifornia.org

The California Children's Health Initiatives (CCHI) is a collaboration of local Children's Health Initiatives (CHIs) in 29 counties dedicated to ensuring that all California children have access to quality health care. Together, the CHIs emphasize streamlined enrollment into Healthy Families, Medi-Cal and Healthy Kids insurance programs, and share a goal of creating and maintaining a sustainable health care program for all children in California.

United Ways of California is a state association of local United Ways and is a strong advocate of expanding health coverage to more children in California. United Ways work closely with local community and business leaders, legislators, congressional members and others to promote this achievable and important goal.

Children Now

Ted Lempert, President – Contact Ronald Pineda at 510-763-2444 x119 to speak to Ted, or contact Ted directly at 510-763-2444 x155 or 650-245-8166

Wilma Chan, Vice President, Policy – 510-763-2444 x105 or 510-388-7812

Kelly Hardy, Associate Director, Health – 510-763-2444 x126

Children's Defense Fund California

Deena Lahn, Policy Director – 510-663-2984

Cliff Sarkin, Senior Program Associate – 510-663-1294

The Children's Partnership

Wendy Lazarus, Founder and Co-President – Contact Carrie Spencer at 310-260-1220 x12 to speak to Wendy or contact Wendy directly at 310-710-9830

Kristen Golden Testa, California Health Program Director – 415-505-1332

PICO California Project

Rebecca Stark, Associate Director – 916-402-5804

Jim Keddy, Director – 916-402-5802

United Ways of California

Judy Darnell, Statewide Director, Covering California's Children – 831-246-3099

California Children's Health Initiatives

Suzie Shupe, Executive Director – 707-527-9213