



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Children's Advocates Urge Governor, Legislature Not to Drop 225,000 California Children From Health Coverage**

**SACRAMENTO**, California — A statement following the Special Election from Deena Lahn, Policy Director, Children's Defense Fund California, on behalf of a statewide coalition of organizations who fight for children's health coverage:

"The results of the Special Election have set the stage for this year's budget negotiations, and as they get underway, the Governor and Legislative leaders can not make children's health a victim of the state's failed budget system.

"The proposed cuts and changes to children's health programs in Governor Schwarzenegger 'worst-case scenario' May Revise are extreme and move away from his long-standing commitment to support children's health coverage, and his promise to ensure that no child in California be left uninsured. The proposed change in income eligibility to the Healthy Families program will result in at least 225,000 children being kicked off the program and losing health coverage. This will have devastating consequences for families across the state as they will now struggle to find affordable health care for their children.

"The Governor's proposals to cut \$750 million from Medi-Cal could have a significant impact on California families, and serve to shrink the influx of federal funds coming into the state at a time when we most need this money. Cuts to Medi-Cal and Healthy Families will force more children to seek care in overcrowded emergency rooms, which are much more costly than preventive care provided by Healthy Families or Medi-Cal.

"Overall, the proposed cuts will push the number of uninsured children in California to well over ONE MILLION. Countless more will lose benefits and become underinsured.

"These are hard times for the state, but they are harder for the families in California who have little to no options for affordable health coverage for their children. These cuts will cost us significantly more in the long run, raise health care costs for everyone and hurt families in the worst possible economic time.

"Furthermore, yesterday voters reaffirmed their commitment to children by voting down Proposition 1D, which would have redirected millions of dollars from children's programs – including health coverage programs – to the state general fund.

"We urge the Governor and the Legislative leaders to not balance the books on the backs of children's health. These cuts will cause irreversible damage to these programs, and puts the health of our children in immediate jeopardy."

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**INFO:** Number of children that may lose Healthy Families Coverage under May Revise proposals:

### **SACRAMENTO AREA COUNTIES**

Sacramento—6,814

San Joaquin—5,074

Stanislaus—3,401

Yolo—966

### **KEY COUNTIES STATEWIDE**

Los Angeles County—57,674

Orange County—21,329

San Diego—18,813

San Francisco—2,903

**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.**

*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](http://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](http://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.*

**California Children's Health Initiatives**

Jan Hefner, Co-Chair, CCHI, (661) 632-5097  
Amy Carta, Co-Chair, CCHI (408) 885-4030

**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

**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, Director of Public Policy – 831-246-3099