

# Harming our children

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Should California's budget be balanced on the backs of our children? That is a real risk with current proposals being considered in Sacramento.

Reducing or eliminating Healthy Families and cutting the Medi-Cal programs for working families will deny health insurance for nearly 44,000 Fresno County children. This cuts nearly a quarter of Fresno's children relying on these programs for immunizations, well-baby check-ups, asthma medications, hospitalizations and dental care.

This means sicker children, more lost days at school and more crowded emergency rooms. As the program administrator for the Children's Health Initiative of Fresno County, it seems foolish to adopt such draconian measures, while unemployment rises and children need more assistance. Lastly, California will forfeit \$685 million in federal Healthy Families funds.

California voters support children's health care. Perhaps it is time to change the political conversation away from these proposed budget cuts to understanding what programs are remaining in the state budget. This may bring us closer to matching our state budget with our values.

The governor and the Legislature need to preserve these health care programs for children, and look creatively at other sources to achieve the desired balanced budget. Do not jeopardize the health of our future generations.

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