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California Children's Health Initiatives Condemns Governor's Proposal to Eliminate Healthy Families, Cut Medi-Cal

*At least one million children would lose health coverage;
Up to 1.5 billion in federal dollars forfeited in this fiscal year alone*

Los Angeles, Calif. – The California Children's Health Initiatives (CCHI), a coalition of 29 counties dedicated to ensuring that all California children have access to quality health coverage, today strongly condemned Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to eliminate the Healthy Families program and cut up to \$750 million from Medi-Cal.

"Those who work every day to help children obtain health insurance to get the care they need are outraged by the Governor's irresponsible proposal to eliminate health coverage for our most vulnerable children," said Suzie Shupe, Executive Director of the California Children's Health Initiatives. "Californians overwhelmingly believe that all children should have health insurance, and to kick such a staggering number of children off health insurance programs at a time when these programs are most needed is both fiscally irresponsible and morally reprehensible."

California's Healthy Families program provides health coverage to more than 900,000 children from families who earn up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, which is \$55,125 annually for a family of four in California. The program enjoys broad bipartisan support and, earlier this year, Congress reauthorized and expanded the program with the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) to enable more children to be covered. Since then, states such as Alabama have expanded their CHIPRA programs, taking advantage of the federal matching funds that provides two dollars for every state dollar invested, yet the Governor's proposal would move California in the exact opposite direction.

"We recognize that the current budget crisis will require hard choices, but budgets are about priorities and we can think of no greater priority than to protect children", said Amy Carta, CCHI Co-Chair. "Forfeiting up to \$1.5 billion in federal dollars and forcing children to seek care in expensive and often overcrowded emergency departments will cost California more money, not less, and is no way to achieve budget savings."

According to the 100% Campaign, California stands to receive up to 1.5 billion dollars in federal funds in fiscal year 2009 alone from CHIPRA. Moreover, their analysis of the Governor's proposal to eliminate Healthy Families would cause at least one million children to lose their health coverage. For example:

County*	Children Enrolled in Healthy Families
Los Angeles	233,000
Riverside and San Bernardino	144,603
Santa Clara	31,376
Sacramento	27,563
Kern	25,961

* See attached document for complete listing of Healthy Families enrollment figures for all California counties

In addition, the Governor's recommendation to cut \$750 million from Medi-Cal will cause our most vulnerable children to lose access to health and dental care services. Independent studies – including studies of the CHIs – have shown that children with health insurance are more likely to get the care they need to ensure their healthy development through preventive care, immunizations to prevent diseases and regular check ups with primary care physicians and dentists. This care contributes to improved school attendance and performance and a decrease in unmet health needs that, if left untreated, translate into costlier hospital visits.

“Those who care about the health and future of California need to make their voices heard loud and clear,” said Shupe. “Our children should not pay the price for the political failures in Sacramento.”

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About the California Children's Health Initiatives (CCHI):

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 coverage. 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.



Governor’s Budget Proposals Attack Children’s Health: At Least One Million Children Would Lose Health Coverage

The Governor is proposing to make devastating cuts to children’s health care to help fill the state’s estimated \$21.3 billion 2009-2010 budget shortfall. On May 21, the Governor’s Department of Finance presented a proposal that would **completely eliminate the Healthy Families Program**. This highly successful program\ provides nearly one million children with affordable health insurance – health coverage working families would not be able to afford in the private market. Largely due to the economic recession, Healthy Families is experiencing the highest levels of new monthly enrollments in history.

At a time when California’s families are most in need of affordable health coverage options, the Governor is proposing to jeopardize the health of California’s children in the name of short-term savings. This strategy will create more fiscal problems in the future as uninsured children get sick, miss school, are unable to get preventive care, and are forced to seek more expensive care in emergency rooms. Moreover, these shortsighted health care cuts will only add to California’s economic woes. The Healthy Families Program could bring up to \$1.5 billion federal dollars into California in federal fiscal year 2009. For every \$1 California invests in Healthy Families, the federal government gives us \$2. California cannot afford to forfeit these federal funds.

How Many Children in Your County Would Lose Low-Cost Healthy Families Coverage?

County	Children Enrolled in Healthy Families
Alameda	20,526
Alpine	2
Amador	416
Butte	3,860
Calaveras	701
Colusa	1,508
Contra Costa	12,778
Del Norte	562
El Dorado	3,025
Fresno	22,536
Glenn	1,441
Humboldt	3,666
Imperial	5,381
Inyo	307
Kern	25,951
Kings	4,215
Lake	1,691
Lassen	260
Los Angeles	233,300
Madera	4,706
Marin	3,001
Mariposa	226
Mendocino	2,447
Merced	9,373
Modoc	171
Mono	447
Monterey	19,674
Napa	3,782
Nevada	2,373
Orange	86,278

County	Children Enrolled in Healthy Families
Placer	4,753
Plumas	297
Riverside	77,316
Sacramento	27,563
San Benito	1,880
San Bernardino	67,287
San Diego	76,103
San Francisco	11,742
San Joaquin	20,525
San Luis Obispo	5,327
San Mateo	10,371
Santa Barbara	10,800
Santa Clara	31,376
Santa Cruz	6,362
Shasta	4,232
Sierra	44
Siskiyou	759
Solano	5,392
Sonoma	12,333
Stanislaus	13,759
Sutter	3,587
Tehama	1,548
Trinity	263
Tulare	14,432
Tuolumne	1,024
Ventura	20,632
Yolo	3,908
Yuba	1,947
All	910,167

*Source: April 2009 Healthy Families Current Enrollment by County at www.mrmib.ca.gov/MRMIB/HFP/Apr_09/HFPRpt2A.pdf