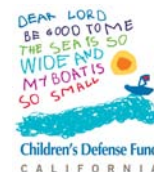




CHILDREN NOW



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California Children Win Health Care Victory

Passage of health reform means children can no longer be denied health coverage because of pre-existing conditions, but work still needs to be done in California to cover every child

Sacramento – Yesterday, the United States House of Representatives passed comprehensive health reform legislation that will significantly improve all Californians' health by providing access to affordable health coverage and preventive care. On behalf of the state's leading children's advocates, Deena Lahn, policy director, Children's Defense Fund, California, released the following statement regarding the passage of this legislation:

"The U.S. House of Representatives has delivered a major victory for children and families by guaranteeing affordable, reliable health care coverage. No longer will insurance companies be able to deny children with pre-existing conditions access to needed health coverage. Working families will finally have affordable health care options for their children, including free preventive care. And, this legislation will expand coverage for millions of uninsured children - some whom will be covered for the first time in their lives.

"We applaud President Obama and members of Congress who are helping to secure a brighter and healthier future for our children.

"The need for health care coverage has never been greater. In 2009, approximately 1.5 million California kids were uninsured - an increase of 400,000 children over just two years. There is no doubt that our families are struggling to make ends meet, and the health of California's kids is in jeopardy.

"At the very time our leaders in Washington are fighting and succeeding in the long battle to bring affordable health care to all children, the State of California is attempting to go the wrong direction. In his recent state budget proposal, Governor Schwarzenegger threatened to significantly cut the state's successful Healthy Families Program. We are working closely with state leaders to help find ways to keep Healthy Families fully funded.

"California legislators must not waste this important victory and opportunity provided to us by our federal leaders. Instead, they should fully fund children's coverage programs and leverage the opportunities presented by health reform to protect what matters most to families: the health of their children."

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If you would like to speak to a representative on behalf of children's health, please call Sheri Madsen 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 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. www.cchi4kids.org

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. www.unitedwaysca.org

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, Director, Health Policy – 510-763-2444 x126

Children's Defense Fund California

Deena Lahn, Policy Director – 415-279-4672

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

United Ways of California

Judy Darnell, Director of Public Policy – 831-246-3099

California Children's Health Initiatives

Suzie Shupe, Executive Director – 707-527-9213