



## Budget Cuts Put Kids on Insurance Waiting List

Posted By: Karen Massie ■ July 18, 2009

SACRAMENTO, CA - "It's been hard so I've been trying to make sure they stay healthy."

Pa Lor of Sacramento worries about her girls -- a 5 year old and a 5 month old.

Like so many other Californians she's struggling. Lor started working in May. Her husband just returned to work following a year-long layoff. "He's only a temporary employee. There's a hiring freeze so he's not able to become full-time and health insurance for the family," said Lor.

They make too much to stay on Medi-Cal and not enough to buy private insurance. It's a situation that's left their girls without coverage.

She's especially worried because it's time to put her 5 year old in preschool. "Hopefully she can get some insurance so she can get a check-up for school," Lor said.

She tried to enroll her children in Healthy Families, California's low-cost insurance program for low-income children. But she got some bad news.

"Healthy Families is facing a \$90 million deficit," said Jennifer Kwan of the Children's Health Initiative.

Kwan explained that state lawmakers approved Gov. Schwarzenegger's plan reduce the program's funding. "That means a thousand kids a day will not have access to Healthy Families," said Kwan. "Twenty-nine thousand kids a month will not have access to Healthy Families."

The program's freeze means Lor's children will go on a waiting list that started Friday. "We don't have enough income to pay for their medical bills," Lor lamented.

If the girls get sick, they'll have to go to hospital emergency rooms. Their care will be much more costly. Patients who have insurance will pay for those visits.

Lor hopes legislators hammering out a revised state budget have a change of heart. "I'd ask them to please have the money there for parents who don't have health insurance for their kids," she said. "The kids really need it."