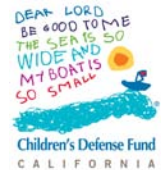




**CHILDREN NOW**



**For Immediate Release  
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## **Alarming New Figures Show Number of Uninsured Children in California Now at 1.5 Million**

**SACRAMENTO** – Today, the UCLA Center for Healthy Policy Research released a new report highlighting how the recession has affected health coverage in California and providing updated figures on the overall number of uninsured children in California. On behalf of the state's leading children's advocates, Wendy Lazarus, Founder and Co-President, The Children's Partnership, released the following statement regarding UCLA's new report and the status of children's health coverage in California.

"The report shows that the total number of California children who were uninsured all or part year rose from 1.1 million in 2007 to approximately 1.5 million in 2009, an increase of more than 36 percent over a two-year period.

"This report should serve as a wake-up call to the Governor, the Legislature, and Congress. More and more of our children are becoming uninsured, and the need for low-cost programs like Healthy Families has never been greater. Children's health is clearly at a crisis point in California and our leaders must face that truth and stop playing politics with the health and lives of our children.

"This number reflects nearly 400,000 newly uninsured children as a result of the recession. As the financial downturn has continued, more families have lost employer-based health coverage, and, correspondingly, the number of children needing state-sponsored health coverage has increased dramatically. During 2009, the average monthly enrollment in the state's Healthy Families Program was more than 29,000 kids, the largest average enrollment growth since the program's inception.

"There can no longer be any doubt that California's families are struggling to make ends meet, and finding access to health coverage for their children is becoming a greater challenge. This issue could be exacerbated by the fact that the Governor has proposed drastic cuts to the Healthy Families Program. If these cuts go into effect, hundreds of thousands of additional children will lose their health coverage, significantly increasing the number of uninsured children in California.

"This report provides further evidence why California's children need Congress to finish the job of health reform. It also makes crystal clear why Governor's ill-advised cuts to kids' health

coverage programs should be rejected by the Legislature. Such cuts would forfeit needed federal matching dollars. Further, the proposed cuts would take California in the wrong direction by jeopardizing children's health and overburdening our emergency room system when these children have no other option of where to go for health care services."

# # #

**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. [www.cchi4kids.org](http://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](http://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

#### **PICO California Project**

Rebecca Stark, Acting Director – 916-402-5804

#### **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