

Unfair cuts

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While I understand the severity of our state's budget deficit, and the need to cut spending, I am saddened that the governor has proposed balancing the budget to the detriment of children's health.

Accessible, affordable and adequate health care is necessary for all people, including children. By eliminating or reducing the number of children eligible for the Healthy Families program, California will put more children at risk for chronic illnesses.

Obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol -- diagnoses previously reserved almost exclusively for adults -- will go unchecked as parents are forced to forgo preventative care for their children, only seeking care in emergency situations. As a pediatrician, I know that regular well child visits support a healthy childhood.

All children have a basic right to a "medical home" where there is continuity of care that includes preventative health and anticipatory guidance (on issues such as healthy eating, active living, immunizations, safety, age appropriate issues) as well as a relationship with a health care provider built upon trust. We'll all pay a much higher price years from now, when heart disease, stroke, diabetes and other preventable illnesses shorten the lives of our next generation.

Ari Hauptman, M.D., FAAP

American Heart Association

Department of Pediatrics, Kaiser-Santa Rosa