

Kansas SCHIP Coalition

Background:

The State Children's Health Insurance Program was created ten years ago to provide health insurance to children who were not eligible for Medicaid but whose families are unable to afford private insurance. Funding for SCHIP is administered to states as a block grant, providing each state with a set amount of federal SCHIP dollars each year. SCHIP is widely agreed to be a huge success, covering more than 6 million children and reducing the number of uninsured children by one third in the last ten years. The original legislation for SCHIP expires at the end of the current federal fiscal year and must be reauthorized by the current congress in order to continue.

Why SCHIP is Important to Kansas:

- SCHIP funding for HealthWave provides health coverage to more than 35,000 Kansas children. Without our SCHIP funding, we would increase the number of uninsured children by 73%.
- SCHIP funding has not kept pace with increases in healthcare costs. Funding has remained essentially level for ten years, while during the same time healthcare costs have risen drastically.
- Kansas is facing a shortfall. If funding is not increased during reauthorization, Kansas is projected to face a shortfall beginning in FFY 2008 that will grow to \$31 million in FFY 2012. Such shortfalls will jeopardize health insurance for thousands of children and possibly curtail efforts to reach eligible children currently not enrolled.
- Funding must be increased during reauthorization. For Congress to maintain their commitment to provide healthcare for low-income children, SCHIP reauthorization must include funds that not only allow for retaining children currently enrolled but allow for more children to access care. There are approximately 48,000 uninsured children in Kansas and 70 percent of them are eligible for public health insurance programs – but to cover more of those children we need to increase the level of SCHIP funding.

Reauthorization Goals

- That SCHIP be reauthorized with sufficient funds to continue covering children now in the program and to cover eligible children who are not now enrolled. Advocates estimate that will cost \$50 billion over five years.
- That states have the flexibility to tailor programs to their unique needs, including covering children in families with incomes over 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Kansas' Role in SCHIP Reauthorization

Members of the Kansas congressional delegation can play important roles in SCHIP reauthorization. While we hope all members of the Kansas delegation lend their strong support to this issue, Senator Roberts and Representative Moore are particularly well positioned to make a difference. As a member of the Finance Committee and of its Health Subcommittee, Sen. Roberts can help shape the SCHIP legislation in the Senate.

As co-chair of the influential Blue Dog Coalition, Rep. Moore can play an important role in crafting a strong SCHIP bill in the House.

Kansas SCHIP Coalition

Formation of a broad coalition of Kansas organizations can send a strong message to our congressional delegation about the importance of covering all eligible children and of preserving state flexibility in program design. Organizations can play an active role in the work of the coalition by educating their members, communicating with our congressional delegation and submitting letters and opinion pieces to newspapers.

Agreement to Join the Coalition

The undersigned organization wishes to join the Kansas SCHIP Coalition:

Organization _____

Name of authorized signer _____

Signature _____

Number of members _____

Address (w/zip) _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

Please complete this form and return to:

Kansas Action for Children
720 SW Jackson, Suite 201
Topeka, KS 66603
785-232-0699 (fax)
schip@kac.org (email)