



National Association of
Children's Hospitals

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LAWRENCE A. McANDREWS, FACHE
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N • A • C • H •

March 13, 2007

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Senator Clinton:

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the National Association of Children's Hospitals, which represents more than 135 children's hospitals nationwide, I write to support your strong leadership and commitment to covering all children through your sponsorship of the "Children's Health First Act."

The bill builds on the single most important conclusion one can draw from the past decade's experience in the continued, relentless loss of health coverage for now more than 46 million Americans. Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) have protected children from the loss of health care coverage, despite the fact that loss of dependent coverage continues to lead the way in the erosion of private coverage. The best way to reach the goal of covering all children is to strengthen the Medicaid and SCHIP foundation for children as your legislation proposes.

We particularly appreciate your legislation's provision of strong incentives for states to enroll eligible children through proven, effective policy reforms; state options to protect employer sponsored coverage; and state options to cover legal immigrant children, pregnant women, and young adults up to age 25. Children's hospitals across the country have a longstanding commitment to enrollment of eligible children, providing outstation enrollment in their facilities and working to promote increased eligibility and enrollment.

We hope to work with you so that your legislation may address other vulnerabilities in Medicaid and SCHIP, vulnerabilities that would be exacerbated should the programs become the major source of coverage for children in families with incomes up to 400 percent of poverty. SCHIP's capped allotments and Medicaid's historically low payments, particularly for physicians, create barriers for children's access to care now as well as challenges for the providers that serve them.

Our hope is that our nation will reach the goal of covering all children. We should take this opportunity and focus on how best to strengthen and secure public support for coverage of the nation's children during the decades of the baby boom's retirement years.

Again, thank you for your leadership and decades of commitment to the health care of all Americans, beginning with children.

Sincerely,

Lawrence A. McAndrews