



**March
of Dimes**
Saving babies, together

*March of Dimes
Birth Defects Foundation*

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July 21, 2000

The Honorable John Dingell
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of more than 3 million volunteers and 1600 staff members of the March of Dimes, I want to commend you for introducing the "FamilyCare Act of 2000." The March of Dimes is committed to increasing access to appropriate and affordable health care for women, infants and children and supports the targeted approach to expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program contained in the FamilyCare proposal.

The "FamilyCare Act of 2000" contains a number of beneficial provisions that would expand and improve SCHIP. The March of Dimes strongly supports giving states the option to cover low-income pregnant women in Medicaid and SCHIP programs with an enhanced matching rate. We understand that FamilyCare would allow states to cover uninsured parents of children enrolled in Medicaid and SCHIP as well as uninsured first-time pregnant women. SCHIP is the only major federally-funded program that denies coverage to pregnant women while providing coverage to their infants and children. We know prenatal care improves birth outcomes. Expanding health insurance coverage for low-income pregnant women has bipartisan support in both the House and Senate.

The March of Dimes also supports FamilyCare provisions to require automatic enrollment of children born to SCHIP parents; automatic screening of every child who loses coverage under Medicaid or SCHIP to determine eligibility for other health programs; and distribution of information on the availability of Medicaid and SCHIP through the school lunch program. The March of Dimes also supports giving states the option to provide Medicaid and SCHIP benefits to children and pregnant women who arrived legally to the United States after August 23, 1996, and to people ages 19 and 20.

We thank you for your leadership in introducing the "FamilyCare Act of 2000" and are eager to work with you to achieve approval of this much needed legislation.

Sincerely,

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees
Chair, Public Affairs Committee

Dr. Jennifer L. Howse
President