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John I. Wilson
Executive Director

September 25, 2007

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Education Association's (NEA) 3.2 million members, we urge you to VOTE YES on passage of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (H.R. 976), which would reauthorize and expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Votes associated with this issue may be included in the NEA Legislative Report Card for the 110th Congress.

Quality health care is essential for the well-being of our nation's children and families. NEA members care deeply about children's health issues and believe that all children deserve the chance for a healthy start in life. Children's access to quality health care can impact on their ability to learn and succeed in school. Children without health insurance forgo the regular checkups and doctor visits that every child needs, leading to unnecessary illness and increased school absenteeism. Yet, too many families lack insurance to cover needed health services.

Over the past ten years, SCHIP has helped reduce the number of uninsured children in America by one-third. However, millions of children remain uninsured or underinsured. H.R. 976 would help address this untenable situation by providing \$35 billion in new five-year funding and allowing the program to serve some four million additional children.

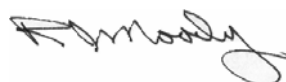
We are particularly pleased that H.R. 976 includes language (section 616) that would extend until May 28, 2008 the moratorium on changes to school based Medicaid claiming. This section will ensure that, at least in the short-term, school districts can continue to claim administrative and transportation costs associated with providing health services to Medicaid eligible students with special needs. Virtually all school-based Medicaid reimbursements are for medically-related services provided to students with disabilities, who are also Medicaid-eligible low-income children. Schools provide medical and other related services beyond the traditional education services as a result of thirty years of congressional policies and federal law under IDEA. Many of these students otherwise would have never attended school and often require continuous care. Providing this broad range of medical and other related services for these students is a major challenge operationally and financially. Section 616 of H.R. 976 will ensure that children with serious and chronic conditions can get the health care they need so that they can go to school.

Again, we urge your support for this very important legislation.

Sincerely,



Diane Shust
Director of Government Relations



Randall Moody
Manager of Federal Advocacy