

CHIP FACT VS. FICTION

Republicans Mislead Public on Bipartisan CHIP Plan



As Republicans attempt to defend President Bush's indefensible veto threat against children's health care coverage, many have resorted to inaccurate claims about the bipartisan plan to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For the 10 million children whose access to quality health care hangs in the balance, let's set the record straight:

FICTION: "We do not believe SCHIP payments should be allowed for illegal aliens who have come into this country without the proper documentation." - *Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), Floor Statement, 8/1/07*

FACT: The bipartisan CHIP reauthorization does not allow payments to illegal aliens. Health coverage is only available to U.S. citizens and LEGAL immigrants who have been in the U.S. for five years.

FICTION: "Republicans believe we should renew SCHIP to cover all low-income children who have no health insurance, not adults who already have health insurance." - *House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH), Press Release, 9/20/07*

FACT: The bipartisan CHIP reauthorization is directed at insuring low-income children, and not adults. States will have the option to cover low-income pregnant women, because research has shown that prenatal care leads to healthier babies, which will reduce the cost of CHIP over time.

FICTION: "We would like to put poor children at the head of the line." - *Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt, Washington Post, 9/21/07*

FACT: The bipartisan CHIP reauthorization puts poor children at the head of the line, focusing on keeping the 6 million children already enrolled in CHIP covered, and

finding and signing up 4 million of low-income children who are already eligible for CHIP but are not enrolled.

FICTION: “Almost every child in America, 78 million children, could be eligible for some sort of SCHIP assistance under the majority Democratic plan.” - *Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), Floor Statement, 8/1/07*

FACT: The bipartisan CHIP reauthorization will give 10 million American children health insurance – not 78 million.

FICTION: “So here we have another situation where we had an opportunity to improve a program that had unsustainable growth, and that was serving people outside of its ... original intent, and actually causing, potentially causing, people who were already under private insurance to potentially shift to government-run insurance.” - *OMB Director Jim Nussle, CongressDaily, 9/18/07*

FACT: Most children covered under CHIP did not have access to health care coverage prior to joining the program – they did not switch from private programs. The CHIP reauthorization is focused on reducing the number of low-income uninsured children, and provides incentives to states to lower this rate. The need is clear: an analysis by the Urban Institute shows that 180,000 uninsured children lived in families with incomes between 200% and 300% of the poverty level. The reauthorization requires states who serve children above that level to submit plans describing how they will address crowd outs to ensure families with coverage do not drop it.

FICTION: “[It is] the single largest step in Washington-controlled, bureaucratized, rationed, socialized health care.” – *Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Floor Statement, 8/1/07*

FACT: 48 states currently run their CHIP program through a private insurance provider. Private doctors and private health plans deliver the services in CHIP. In fact, America’s Health Insurance Plans – the largest insurance lobbying group in the U.S. – endorsed the CHIP reauthorization yesterday, “undercutting Bush’s contention that the bill is a step away from private insurance and toward government-run health care.”
[Washington Post, 9/25/07]

FICTION: “We don’t need to increase the funding by \$50 billion and start covering children who already have health insurance because their families make more than \$100,000 a year.” - *Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA), Floor Statement, 8/1/07*

FACT: The CHIP reauthorization does not expand eligibility for CHIP; it targets low and lower-middle-income children who have no health insurance, not children from wealthy families. Currently, less than 1 in 10 children covered by CHIP live in a family of four earning more than \$41,000 a year; this will remain the same under this bill.