

Partnership for Medicaid Partnership for Medicaid

April 28, 2014

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sens. Wyden and Hatch and Reps. Upton and Waxman,

On behalf of the Partnership for Medicaid – a nonpartisan, nationwide coalition of safety-net providers, counties, labor and health plans – we appreciate your leadership to protect children’s health and urge you to take action this year to continue funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As you know, the funding authorization for CHIP is currently set to expire October 1, 2015, unless Congress approves its extension.

CHIP has been a reliable source of coverage for low-income children in working families whose parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to afford private health insurance. Medicaid and CHIP serve as a vital safety net for our nation’s children. Since the creation of CHIP in 1997, the number of uninsured children has been cut nearly in half. Almost 93 percent of children have health coverage today and these incredible gains are in part because of the role of CHIP in covering millions of children nationwide. It is essential that Congress continues to fund CHIP in order to maintain our national investment in children’s health.

As organizations whose members provide health care to underserved populations, we see first-hand the difference that stable, affordable coverage makes for families and their children in accessing needed care. CHIP is an affordable coverage option that was specifically designed with children in mind. CHIP also allows states flexibility in designing their program and incentives for outreach and enrollment efforts that best meet the needs of their population. This has made CHIP a popular program among state leaders.

As states adjust to changes in health care coverage, we believe it is essential that Congress secure CHIP’s future this year so that states can continue to operate their programs without interruption. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the 12.7 million children expected to be enrolled in

fiscal year 2015 would be at risk of losing their CHIP coverage in 2016 if funding is not continued for the program.

Inaction or delayed action would allow funding for CHIP to lapse. This would disrupt coverage for millions of children and many children will have no other affordable coverage options available to them.

We look forward to working with the Administration, Congress and States to continue CHIP and ensure children have access to the care they need, when they need it.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
America's Essential Hospitals
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children's Hospital Association
Easter Seals
The Jewish Federations of North America
Medicaid Health Plans of America
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Counties
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Rural Health Association

cc: Sen. Harry Reid, Majority Leader, United States Senate
Sen. Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader, United States Senate
Rep. John Boehner, Speaker of the House, United States House of Representatives
Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader, United States House of Representatives
Sen. John D. Rockefeller, Chair, Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health Care
Sen. Pat Roberts, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health Care
Rep. Joe Pitts, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
Rep. Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health