

March 2007

Dear Member of Congress,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to support proposed legislation granting states the option to cover lawfully residing immigrant children and pregnant women under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicaid. This legislation, the "Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act" (ICHIA, S.764, H.R.1308), would go far in restoring equity to the coverage of uninsured children and should be an essential component of this year's SCHIP reauthorization.

ICHIA has a history of strong bipartisan support in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as long-standing support from organizations such as the undersigned. The National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislators as well as every major state and local government organization have endorsed this policy change.

Under current law, lawfully residing pregnant women and children who have entered the country since August 22, 1996 are barred from Medicaid and SCHIP for five years. This restriction has increased racial and ethnic health disparities among children in the U.S. While SCHIP and Medicaid expansions have increased insurance coverage for citizen children over the past decade, coverage for low-income immigrant children has fallen further behind. This is true even though many states with the greatest numbers of immigrant children have chosen to extend health coverage to them using state funds, recognizing that SCHIP and Medicaid are vital supports. Providing a state option to restore access would encourage more states to cover immigrant children and would give fiscal redress to the states that are already doing so.

Research by the Urban Institute shows that immigrant children are much less likely to obtain medical care than native-born children. Failing to provide basic preventive care for immigrant children jeopardizes their health and creates a need for more expensive subsequent care. Similarly, failing to provide prenatal care risks the health of newborn U.S. citizens and increases the need for costly medical interventions after birth.

It is not only fiscally unwise but also arbitrary and fundamentally unfair to deny health coverage to immigrant children and pregnant women because of the date they arrived in the U.S. Legal resident families contribute to the fabric of their communities. Their members pay taxes that support public health insurance programs, and they serve in the military, defending and dying for our country. Despite immigrants' high rate of employment, almost half of low-income immigrant children are uninsured, a rate three times higher than that of children from native-born families. That is why any serious commitment to "covering all kids," to reducing health disparities, or to increasing the enrollment of low-income children and pregnant women in SCHIP and Medicaid, must redress the arbitrary exclusion of lawfully residing immigrants from these programs.

We look forward to working with you to pass ICHIA as a critical part of reauthorizing the SCHIP Program.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

9to5, National Association of Working Women
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families
Alliance for Healthy Homes
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Dental Education Association
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Committee
American Medical Student Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
Asian American Justice Center
Asian Pacific American Legal Center
Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project
Boat People SOS
Bon Secours
Campaign for Working Families
Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Child and Family Policy Center
Child Welfare League of America
ChildCareGroup
Children's Defense Fund
Chinese Staff and Worker's Association
Coalition on Human Needs
Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking
Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning
Collaborating Center for African American Leadership Development
Connecting Cultures, Inc.
Cornucopia
Corporation for Supportive Housing

Deborahs Place
Easter Seals
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Every Child Matters Education Fund
Eyes Wide Open International
Families USA
Family Voices
Farmworker Justice
First Focus
Health and Disability Advocates
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
HIV Medicine Association
Hmong National Development
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Institute for Reproductive Health
International Socialist Organization
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Legal Momentum
Medicaid Health Plans of America
Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office
Mental Health America
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty
Mexican American Legal Defense Educational Fund
Migrant Legal Action Program
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Coalition of Mental Health Professionals and Consumers
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Forum
National Immigration Law Center
National Independent Life Association
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Respite Coalition
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office

RESULTS

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

Salvadoran American National Association-SANA

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Service Employees International Union

Social Relief International

Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.

Tahirih Justice Center

The AIDS Institute

The Children's Law Center

The Coordinating Center

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

U.S. Mexico Border Health Association

Union For Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

United Association for Labor Education

United Auto Workers

United Farm Workers of America

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union

United for a Fair Economy

United Methodist Church

Veterans for Christ International, Inc.

Women of Reform Judaism

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

World Hunger Education, Advocacy & Training organization.

YKASEC-Empowering the Korean American Community

Alabama

Early Childhood Directions - The HIPPIY - Mobile Program

Alaska

Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center

Arizona

Arizona Advocacy Network

Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness

Arizona Head Start Association

Global Family Legal Services

National Association of Social Workers, Arizona Chapter

NOVA, Inc.

Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition

Tempe Hispanic Forum

Arkansas

St. Augustine Center

California

Alameda County –California Women's Agenda

Asian Health Services

Asian Law Alliance

California Central Valley Journey For Justice

California Council of Churches IMPACT

California Food Policy Advocates

California Immigrant Policy Center

California Pan Ethnic Health Network

California Partnership

California Reinvestment Coalition

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton

Catholic Healthcare West

Central Valley Partnership.

Chicanos/Latinos for Community Medicine

City College of San Francisco Family Resource Center

City of Berkeley Health Department

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles

Comite No Nos Vamos

Community Health Councils

Community Works

CoSeCHa

Gray Panthers California

Immaculate Heart Community

International Institute of the East Bay

Korean Resource Center

Law Center for Families

Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights

Lutheran Office of Public Policy, California

Marincil

Maternal and Child Health Access

Medicaid Health Plans of America

Mill Valley Seniors for Peace

Mission Presbyterian Church

National Lawyer's Guild San Francisco Bay

Parent Voices

Poverty Matters

Project Inform

San Ysidro Health Center

SEIU Local 1877

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

UC Davis Cancer Center Outreach Research & Education Program
Young Workers United

Colorado

Arc of Denver, inc.
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Community Health Services, Inc.
CP of Colorado, Inc.
Growing Home
International Anglican Church in Colorado Springs
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - Colorado
Partners for Children and Families
Rocky Mountain SER Denver Head Start
Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence
The Arc of Weld County

Connecticut

Collaborative Center for Justice
Community Health Center, Inc.
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Connecticut Legal Services
Connecticut Voices for Children
Connecticut Call To Action
Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.
New Haven Diaper Bank
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
Planned Parenthood of Connecticut
TogetherWeShine
United Church of Christ

Delaware

La Esperanza

District of Columbia

The Children's Law Center

Florida

Coalition for Independent Living Options
Congregation for Community Action
Farmworker Association of Florida
Florida Community Health Action Information Network
Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center
Florida Immigrant Coalition

Florida Legal Services, Inc.
Health Care Center for the Homeless
Hispanic Unity of Florida
Human Services Coalition of Dade County
Hunger and Homeless Coalition of Citrus County, Inc.
St. Joseph's Children's Hospital
Unite for Dignity, Inc.
Whole Child Project Manatee

Georgia

Clinical Social Work Association of Savannah
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Hispanic Ministry, Catholic Diocese of Savannah
Memorial Health University Medical Center

Hawaii

Honolulu Community Action Program
Na Loio - Immigrant Rights & Public Interest Legal Center

Idaho

Idaho Community Action Network
La Posada Ministry - Sisters of Mercy

Illinois

East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center
Health and Disability Advocates
Healthy Albany Park
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Illinois Primary Health Care Association
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center
Lutheran Advocacy -- Illinois
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
Project IRENE
Sacred Heart Province JPIC
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Indiana

Indiana Minority Health Coalition
Indiana Perinatal Network

Iowa

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Sisters of the Presentation Dubuque
Southwest Iowa Resource Center
West Des Moines Human Services

Kansas

El Centro, Inc.
New Beginnings Inc.
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia

Kentucky

Fellowship of Reconciliation - Louisville
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Office of Kentucky Legal Services Programs
Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital
Ursuline Sisters of Louisville
Women's Crisis Center

Louisiana

Catholic Community Services of Baton Rouge
Kingsley House
Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations
Louisiana Democracy Project

Maine

Advocacy Initiative Network of Maine
Aroostook Agency on Aging
Consumers for Affordable Health Care
Disability Rights Center of Maine
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
Maine Equal Justice Partners
Maine People's Alliance
Maine Primary Care Association
Maine Women's Lobby

Maryland

Advocates for Children & Youth
Bon Secours Health System
Coalition for Healthy Maryland Children
Friends of the Harbor Group
Housing Opportunities Commission
Lutheran Office on Public Policy in Maryland
Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association
Medicaid Matters! Maryland
Montgomery Health Care ACTION
The Steering Committee of the Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform

Massachusetts

Boston Public Health Commission
Community Partners
Episcopal City Mission
Kids Project
Lowell Community Health Center
Maine Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Neighborhood Legal Services
Office of Total Assistance, Inc.
The Boston Public Health Commission
Western MA Legal Services
Western Massachusetts Legal Services, Inc.

Michigan

Bethany Christian Services
Cabrini Clinic
Center for Civil Justice
Michigan League for Human Services
Michigan Legal Services
Michigan Migrant Legal Assistance Project, Inc.
Michigan Organizing Project
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section
School Community Health Alliance of Michigan
Sisters of Mercy Detroit
Washtenaw County Workers' Center
Willow Run Head Start

Minnesota

Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project
Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis
Mid Minnesota Legal Services
Minnesota Citizens Organized ACTing Together
Catholic Charities of St. Paul-Minneapolis, Office of Social Justice

Mississippi

Catholic Charities, Jackson

Missouri

Institute for Peace and Justice
Intercommunity Housing Association
Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates
RESULTS St. Louis
Sacred Heart Guadalupe Church

Montana

Forward Montana
Montana Conservation Voters
Montana Human Rights Network
Montana People's Action
Montana Senior Citizens Association
Working for Equality and Economic Liberation

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest
New American Center
State of Nebraska Mexican-American Commission

Nevada

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Immigrants' Rights Task Force

New Jersey

Association for Children of New Jersey
Hudson Perinatal Consortium
Human Rights Project, Seton Hall Law Center for Social Justice
Hunterdon Hispanos
La Casita: Immigration Legal Services
New Jersey Catholic Conference
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
New Jersey Primary Care Association
Newark Beth Israel Medical Center
St Elizabeth's Social Justice Ministry
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

New Mexico

Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry, New Mexico
Maryknoll Affiliates
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Voices for Children
Young Women United

New York

Albany Medical Center
Bon Secours Community Hospital
Bon Secours New York Health System
Cathedral Emergency Services

Catholic Charities of New York
Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga
Citizen Action New York
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
Creative Learning Center
Daughters of Charity
Empire Justice Center
Farmworker Legal Services of New York, Inc.
Five Borough Institute
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP
Health and Welfare Council of Long Island
Healthcare Association of New York State
inMotion
Interfaith Caregivers of the Northwest Bronx
Latin American Integration Center
Latinos Unidos of the Hudson Valley, Inc.
Legal Services Staff Association
Long Island Health Access Monitoring Project
Make the Road By Walking
Medicaid Matters New York
New York Immigration Coalition
New York State Office Mental Health Creedmoor Psychiatric Center
New York Taxi Workers Alliance
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership
Peace of Social Justice
Regional Economic Community Action Program
Resilience Law and Advocacy Project
Safe Horizon Immigration Law Project
Schervier Nursing Care Center
Sisters of St Joseph of Rochester
Society of Jesus, New York Province
St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan
The Child Center of New York
The Rockland Immigration Coalition
UJA-Federation of New York
United We Stand of New York, Ltd.
Victim Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, Inc
West Side Campaign Against Hunger
Women's City Club of New York

North Carolina

El Pueblo, Inc.
Franciscan Coalition
Good Work
Hispanic Liaison Of Chatham County
International Friendship Center

Latin American Coalition
Legal Services of Southern Piedmont
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina Fair Share
North Carolina Farmworkers Project
North Carolina Justice Center
The Advocacy for the Poor, Inc.

North Dakota

Mental Health Association in North Dakota

Ohio

Call to Renewal of Summit County
Justice & Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ
Neighborhood Family Practice
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks
Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
The Northcoast Center
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio

Oklahoma

Immigrant Rights Project, The University of Tulsa

Oregon

Asian Pacific American Consortium on Substance Abuse
Children First for Oregon
Community Action Agency
Eugene Mennonite Church
Human Services Coalition of Oregon
Latinos Unidos Siempre
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Oregon
Oregon Center for Public Policy
Street Roots

Pennsylvania

Action Alliance of Senior Citizens
Altoona Regional Health System
Billings Resource Center
Children's Coalition of the Lehigh Valley
Chinatown Clinic
Chinatown Medical Services
Chinese Health Information Center of Jefferson Hospital
Community Organizing Collective
Consumer Health Coalition
Cultural Connections Collaborative
Delaware Valley Community Health, Inc

Greater Philadelphia Health Action
Health Promotion Council
Maternity Care Coalition
National Council of Jewish Women - Pennsylvania
Nationalities Service Center
PathWaysPA
Pennsylvania NOW, Inc.
Philadelphia Access Center
Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth
Philadelphia Mental Health Care Coalition
Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
Taxi Workers Alliance of Pennsylvania
University of Pennsylvania Health System

Rhode Island

Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy
Dioceses of Providence
Jamestown Justice and Peace Advocacy Group
Lao Representative Abroad Council
National Council of Jewish Women, Rhode Island section
Ocean State Action

South Carolina

Coalition for New South Carolinians
Lowcountry Council of Governments- Family Caregiver Support Program
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
United Way of Greenwood and Abbeville Counties

Tennessee

Catholic Charities, Nashville
Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association
The Black Children's Institute of Tennessee

Texas

Catholic Charities, Houston
Catholic Diocese Of Dallas
Center for Faith and Health Initiatives
Centro Comunitario Mexicano - DFW
ChildCareGroup
Children's Hospital Association of Texas
Daughters of Charity, Dallas, Texas
Houston Community Services
Houston Peace and Justice Center
La Fe Policy and Advocacy Center
La Union del Pueblo Entero

Political Asylum Project of Austin
South Texas Food Bank
The Woodland Alliance of Tenants
United Way of Tarrant Co.
Voices for Children of San Antonio

Utah

Comunidades Unidas
Utah Health Policy Project

Virginia

Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services Inc
Bon Secours Hampton Roads Health system
Bon Secours Richmond Health System
Care Connection for Children
Child Development Resources CHIP Program
CHIP of Virginia
Consortium for Infant and Child Health
Inova Alexandria Hospital
Inova Fairfax Hospital
Institute of Social Medicine & Community Health
Kiwanis Children's Council of Hampton Roads
Lynnhaven Colony Congregational United Church of Christ
Mary Immaculate Hospital
Northern Virginia Regional, Planning Commission
Project Family Arlington
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Mid-Atlantic
Virginia Association of Community Service Boards
Virginia Chapter, American College of Nurse-Midwives
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Virginia Organizing Project
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Voices for Virginia's Children

Washington

Aging and Long Term Care
AIDS Housing of Washington
API Women and Family Safety Center
Asian Counseling & Referral Service
Children's Alliance
Forks Community Hospital
Healthcare for All
International Community Health Services
Kids Northwest
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

Northwest Women's Law Center
Sea Mar Community Health Center
Solid Ground Washington
Washington Community Action Network

West Virginia

Direct Action Welfare Group Inc.
Eastern Panhandle Hispanic Advocacy Coalition

Wisconsin

9to5, Poverty Network Initiative
Carthage College Social Work Club
Disability Rights Wisconsin
La Causa, Inc.
Pagans for Peace
St. Bernard Social Justice Committee
The New Hope Project
Wisconsin Council of Churches

Wyoming

El Puente