



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Thursday, Nov. 16, 2006

**CONTACT:**

Jennifer Combs  
(202) 687-0331

**Congress Has Tools to Move Forward on Children's Coverage**  
***Full Funding of SCHIP Required to Ensure Children Get Needed Care***

WASHINGTON---Building on the success of the State Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, Congress has several tools at its disposal to move further ahead on child health coverage, Lisa Dubai, a research and policy adviser at the Center for Children and Families, said today at a congressional hearing.

As Congress prepares to re-authorize SCHIP next year, Congress must decide whether to fully fund the federal-state child health program for 2007 and beyond, Dubai said during an appearance before the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health. SCHIP funding is set to expire at the end of fiscal year 2007.

"As the 10-year anniversary of SCHIP approaches, the evidence is clear: SCHIP and its larger companion program, Medicaid, have been resoundingly successful in lowering the uninsured rate of low-income children. We must fully fund SCHIP to ensure that more children have the coverage they need," said Dubai, who is also a research scientist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Dubai's testimony notes that financing is the key challenge in the SCHIP program, which is funded through a block-grant structure. Some 17 states are slated to run short of funds this fiscal year (2007), if Congress does not act. Left unaddressed, the financing problems surrounding SCHIP will grow and result in 1.9 million children losing coverage by 2016, according to Bush administration estimates. Additional federal matching funds in excess of the current annual allotments --- \$5 billion ---- will be needed to continue making progress in covering children.

To build on the success of SCHIP and Medicaid, Congress must also:

**Adopt New Strategies to Reach Uninsured Children Eligible for SCHIP and Medicaid**

States generally know what strategies work to enroll eligible children, but coverage costs sometimes deters them from advancing or from maintaining these strategies. New approaches, such as, offering performance-based assistance with coverage costs to states successful in covering uninsured children, can help keep the nation moving in the right direction.

**Consider Coverage Strategies that Cover Parents as Well as Children**

Family-based coverage is associated with a 14-percentage point increase in the participation of children in health insurance programs and results in more children receiving preventive care.

*Lisa Dubai's written testimony submitted to the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health will be available on the CCF Web site at <http://ccf.georgetown.edu>.*