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More than a Dozen States are Moving Forward on Children's Health Coverage, As California Moves Backward on Covering Uninsured Children

Washington, D.C. -- During tough budget times, most states have maintained their commitment to covering uninsured children, according to Jocelyn Guyer, Co-Director of the Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute. At least eighteen states have even further strengthened coverage for uninsured children, despite budget problems, according to CCF's Guyer.

"While many states have prioritized covering [uninsured children](#), California lawmakers voted to deny coverage to children," said Guyer. This decision ignores strong [public support](#) for providing affordable health coverage to children and families," said Guyer.

The decision also undermines California's ability to access federal funds, just when the state needs them most. The [Children's Health Insurance Program Act of 2009](#) made the federal government an even stronger partner for states that prioritize covering uninsured children. California's \$144 million children's coverage cut will cost the state \$267 million in federal funds.

"This is a difficult time for state budgets but an even harder time for family budgets, and many states are responding to meet the need," said Guyer.

Alabama, Washington, North Dakota, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Montana have all expanded coverage; Oregon and Ohio are on the verge of doing the same. Other states have instituted reforms designed to make their CHIP and Medicaid programs more family-friendly, all with the goal of increasing access to affordable health coverage for children.

[California](#) faces unique public policy challenges that have contributed to this step backward for children. The state was hit particularly hard by the economic and housing crises. More importantly, California has legal restrictions that put large shares of the state's budget out of lawmakers' reach, as well as supermajority requirements for passage of budget legislation.

"While the search continues for ways to help California restore affordable health coverage options

for children and families and hope remains high that national health insurance reform will be enacted soon, California's decision should not diminish the accomplishments of the other states," said Guyer. "It is critical that states keep working to strengthen and maintain the gains they've made in offering affordable health coverage options to uninsured children and that the federal government remain a strong partner in their efforts."

The Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute closely tracks and analyzes state and federal health coverage policies and the impact on children and families. For up-to-date information on how states are handling the increasing demand for affordable health coverage and analysis of national health reform proposals, visit [CCF's website](#) or [Say Ahhh!](#) A Children's Health Policy Blog.

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