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Statement by Cindy Mann on the Obama Administration's Rescission of the August 17th Directive

On February 4th, President Obama took an important step forward on behalf of children by directing the Department of Health and Human Services to rescind a directive issued by the Centers on Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on August 17, 2007.

That directive sought to sharply limit state flexibility to set the income eligibility levels in their Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP). Since the time it was issued, the directive has halted or delayed state coverage efforts around the country, causing tens of thousands of uninsured children to lose out on coverage. The policy was sorely out of touch with the fact that rising health care costs and a weakening economy has created strain and hardship for families seeking affordable coverage for their children.

The rescission of this ill-considered policy, in combination with the just-enacted CHIP reauthorization law, signals that the federal government is prepared to help, rather than stymie, state efforts to cover uninsured children.

The directive, the new executive order, as well as analyses of the directive can be accessed at <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/index/cmsdirective>.

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