

For Immediate Release  
Thursday, July 17, 2008

Statement by Cindy Mann

Executive Director of the Center for Children and Families

at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute

## Georgetown CCF Director Commends Senators on Efforts to Overturn the Bush Administration SCHIP Directive

“I commend this bipartisan group of Senators for working together to overturn the Bush Administration State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) directive. The directive couldn’t have been imposed on the states at a worse time. As more families are experiencing financial hardship, the directive severely limits states’ options to soften the impact of the economic downturn on their most vulnerable residents – uninsured children.

Unpaid medical bills piling up on the kitchen table are not as obvious signals of trouble as foreclosure signs cropping up in yards, but the pain they can inflict is just as harmful. If this policy had been proposed through the legal regulatory process, the Administration may have learned ahead of time how out of touch it is with the economic reality faced by families and the states that are trying to help them. Now the Administration has dug its heels in and it is up to Congress to overturn a bad policy that was put together behind closed doors.

This federal agency directive has already kept tens of thousand of children from gaining coverage that their states had planned to extend to them—states as diverse as Louisiana,

Oklahoma and Ohio. Children in numerous other states could be affected on August 17, 2008, so it is critical that Congress act to overturn the directive before its full impact is felt by uninsured children. As the economy weakens and more families find themselves unable to afford health insurance, the federal government ought to be helping rather than hindering state efforts to assist uninsured children.”

### Background

The Georgetown University Center for Children and Families (CCF) issued a report on the chilling effect the directive has had on states’ efforts to make health care coverage more affordable for children. The report found the directive drastically alters the rules that have governed the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) for more than ten years. The report also focuses on how the Administration bypassed proper regulatory procedures, triggering an outcry from more than 30 governors and a series of lawsuits.

The full report and other information about the SCHIP directive are available from

<http://ccf.georgetown.edu>.