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Contact:
Martha Heberlein
202-687-4929
meh88@georgetown.edu

**Statement of Cindy Mann, Executive Director, Center for Children and Families,
Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute**

New Census Data on Uninsured Children

In 2007, the number of uninsured children fell by 500,000 to 8.1 million, according to data released today by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. This progress is a testament to the effectiveness of public programs, which were largely responsible for this movement, and to the strong support nationwide for covering children.

In 2006 and 2007, states across the country were moving forward in improving public programs for children. Most notably, along with expanding coverage, many sought to eliminate some of the unnecessary barriers that keep eligible, low-income children from enrolling in public programs. The new data indicate that the largest coverage gains were among the lowest-income children.

Clearly, though, with more than 8 million uninsured children in the country and the weak economy threatening coverage for a growing number of America's families, there is much more that needs to be done.

As a first step, the country needs to secure and strengthen the public programs that are critical to the coverage of our children. During the economic downturn, it is imperative that Congress act quickly to reauthorize and strengthen the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which otherwise will expire on March 31, 2009. It also will be important to provide states with the financial resources that they need to sustain and improve their Medicaid programs. These two programs will be central building blocks as the nation moves forward to consider broader health reform for children and adults.

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CCF is an independent, nonpartisan research and policy center based at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute whose mission is to expand and improve health coverage for America's children and families. For more information visit <http://ccf.georgetown.edu>, email us at childhealth@georgetown.edu or call (202) 687-0880.