

**For Immediate Release:**

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*Cindy Mann, executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, issued the following statement on the release of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Children's Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act of 2007 (H.R. 3162) to renew the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).*

The House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman's bill to renew SCHIP represents a major step forward for children --- one that is solidly in line with voter sentiment. According to a July 2007 nationwide poll, 91 percent of Americans want Congress to help states cover more uninsured children.

The Energy and Commerce bill moves strongly in this direction by providing states new funding and tools to reach uninsured children. The commitment of \$50 billion --- paid for largely by an increase in the tobacco tax and the elimination of overpayments to private Medicare Advantage plans --- would result in an additional 5.1 million uninsured children gaining coverage in 2012.

Notably, the legislation is targeted to reach the children who are currently eligible for SCHIP and Medicaid ---- the lowest income uninsured children. More than half of the 6 million uninsured children who already are eligible for SCHIP and Medicaid are expected to be covered as a result of changes included in this bill.

The bill also assures that SCHIP reauthorization does not add to the number of uninsured Americans. States will continue to have the flexibility to decide the income levels of the children they will cover --- a hallmark of the original SCHIP law. The bill also allows the limited number of states with parent coverage waivers approved by the federal government to continue operating them.

Support for children's coverage is strong in all parts of the country without regard to party affiliation. Given such support, a diverse array of states is moving forward, building on the success of SCHIP and Medicaid, to make coverage available to more uninsured children. The House Energy and Commerce Chairman's bill would assure that the federal government remains a full partner with states in this important effort.

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*The Center for Children and Families (CCF) is an independent, nonpartisan 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 additional information on SCHIP reauthorization, visit Center for Children and Families' Web site at <http://ccf.georgetown.edu>.*