

For Immediate Release:

Friday, Aug. 3, 2007

Contact:

Jennifer Combs
(202) 687-0331
(202) 306-8437 (cell)

Cindy Mann, executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, issued the following statement on the Senate's and House's approval of legislation to renew the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Children were well served by their political leaders this week. Both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate voted to approve legislation to reauthorize the SCHIP program and ensure that millions more of America's children will have the health care coverage that they need.

When Congress reconvenes in September, House and Senate leaders will need to work quickly to craft a final bill before SCHIP funding expires in less than 60 days from today. It should help that the House and Senate bills share some important elements. Both provide states with new funding and tools to cover uninsured children, particularly those in the lowest-income families who already are eligible for SCHIP or Medicaid. From a child health perspective, the largest single difference is that the House devotes \$50 billion to covering children compared to \$35 billion in the Senate. As a result, the House bill is expected to cover a million more children than the Senate bill.

Perhaps the largest obstacle to progress is the possibility that the White House will use the occasion of SCHIP reauthorization to foster a philosophical dispute over the future of health care. A veto would hurt children and be sorely out of step with the position

of key leaders in the President's own party, the nation's Governors, as well as the American people.

The work of the House and the Senate this week is a promising sign that Congress can and will seize this historic opportunity to build on SCHIP's successful track record and take a significant step forward in covering America's uninsured children.

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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>.