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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 a State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) conference agreement.

Putting America's children first, House and Senate negotiators have produced a SCHIP conference agreement that will ensure that millions more children have the health care that they need.

The agreement is a compromise. While it falls short of what many were hoping would be included in a final bill, the agreement is a recognition that voters want Congress to take action to ensure that children have health care coverage. This agreement would improve children's coverage markedly over the next five years. According to the congressional announcement, about 4 million additional uninsured children would gain coverage if this agreement becomes law.

The SCHIP compromise continues the bipartisanship that has been a hallmark of this program since it was created a decade ago. The president should take heed of the wide and growing support for the agreement among members of his own party and governors throughout the nation and sign the agreement into law. Quick action on this compromise agreement is needed so that states can move forward to make this promise of coverage a reality for the nation's children.

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For additional information on SCHIP reauthorization, visit the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families Web site at <http://ccf.georgetown.edu>.