



SUMMARY

In 2007, Washington state became a national leader in ensuring health coverage for all children. Washington's children's health coverage law (SB 5093) provides affordable, comprehensive health coverage options to all children in the state and includes measures to ensure that every child will get high-quality care in a "medical home."



House Speaker Frank Chopp speaks at the bill signing ceremony. Photo by Ruth Schubert.

Resources

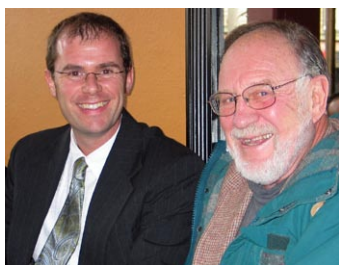
Plain language summary of Washington's Cover All Kids Law (pdf)

Websites, resources and articles we've bookmarked

Media coverage of children's health in Washington

BACKGROUND

The Children's Alliance—in cooperation with our Health Coalition for Children and Youth—worked over the summer and fall of 2006 to identify the policy components for a universal children's health coverage bill. Working with a variety of coalition partners and state officials, we identified the policy steps to ensure that children have health coverage and access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place. These steps included expansion of eligibility to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), improving access to care via a medical home, and improving health care quality via pay-for-performance reimbursement to providers.



HCCY chair Dr. John Neff (right) and Coalition member Hugh Ewart (left) of the Community Health Network of Washington. Photo by Otts Bolisay.

As preparation for the 2007 legislative session, we published our [policy recommendations](#) in a report to the state's Blue Ribbon Health Care Commission. In November, the Children's Alliance convened a [statewide children's health summit](#) to build momentum and advocacy capacity for the upcoming legislative session. The summit was instrumental in sharing key messages for the strategic communications component of this campaign.

Governor Chris Gregoire's [video introduction](#) to the health summit set the tone, when she declared: "At this summit your task is clear: to identify the policy elements and strategies to achieve full health coverage for the children of Washington."



Join the Children's Action Network



Read our News Blog

All children deserve to have a doctor who can prescribe inhalers for their asthma or insulin for their diabetes. And no child should wait until they're in their teens for their first trip to a dentist's chair. This new law is a wise investment – with the potential to improve the health and well-being of the state's population for years to come.

– Spokesman-Review

WHAT HAPPENED

Children's health was a high profile issue from the opening day of the legislative session. Children's health was the subject of the very first work session in the House Health Care and Wellness Committee. The Children's Alliance organized a panel presentation to tout the multiple benefits of comprehensive health coverage for all children.

Early in the legislative session, Governor Gregoire introduced executive-request children's health legislation (House Bill 1071 and Senate Bill 5093) that mirrored much of the Children's Alliance recommendations.

The members of the Health Coalition for Children and Youth supported the legislation, while seeking improvements in selected areas to match our policy proposal. We achieved two big successes when both the House Health Care and Wellness and the Senate Health

and Long-Term Care Committees improved the bill by expanding coverage to children in families up to 300% of FPL and making the program an entitlement for all children below 250% of FPL.

Throughout the legislative session, the Health Coalition for Children and Youth met on a weekly basis to ensure coordinated and effective advocacy, including lobbying, mobilization and media work. The consistency of communication helped produce unity among a range of organizations and contributed to effective lobbying at the Capitol.

Senate Bill 5093 [passed the Senate](#) with a bi-partisan, Valentine's Day vote of 38-9. The bill then began its journey through the House of Representatives. After clearing the House Appropriations Committee unchanged on March 1st, the bill headed to a final vote in the House of Representatives.

In preparation for the final vote in the House of Representatives, the Children's Alliance helped to build momentum by releasing [statements of support](#) from a broad range of bi-partisan public leaders. Senate Bill 5093 passed the House with another bi-partisan vote (68-28) and was headed to the Governor's desk.

Seeking a large celebration of this historic victory, the Children's Alliance advocated for bill signing in the State Reception room and then worked with partners and the Governor's staff to organize the celebration. On March 13, 2007, Governor Gregoire signed the bill, surrounded by legislators, organizations, and, most importantly, children. The bill signing ceremony was [televised](#) by TVW and [photos of the celebration](#) are on the Children's Alliance website. Several newspapers around the state [editorialized](#) in favor of the new law and a [blog](#) entry told the history of the campaign.

NEXT STEPS

Between now and 2010, there are many implementation issues to ensure that the promise of health coverage for every child becomes a reality. The [Health Coalition for Children and Youth](#) is already hard at work on these. The first steps include working on the July 2007 expansion of eligibility for immigrant children, statewide outreach and health promotion, and performance measures. We are also working to maximize federal support through the anticipated 2007 reauthorization of the federal State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Perhaps the largest challenge will be changing current practice and

culture in state government. In the past, children's health coverage has been a program for selected children. With Washington's new law providing coverage options for all children, it is vital that the Department of Social and Health Services modify and modernize agency practices to ensure family-friendly access, and promote better health outcomes.



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"Not one child should go without health coverage. Not one mom or dad should have to stay awake at night worried about what to do if their child breaks their arm, catches pneumonia or, God forbid, gets leukemia. This bill will not just provide coverage, but will lead to better health outcomes for children."

– Representative Judy Clibborn



If you're reading a printout of this End of Session Report, here are some of the links that are embedded throughout:

Main Links

Children's Alliance -
<http://childrensalliance.org>

Join the Children's Action Network -
<http://www.childrenshub.org/calliance/join.html>

News blog -
<http://childrensalliance.typepad.com/news/>

Health Coverage for Every Child

Plain language summary of Washington's Cover All Kids law -
http://childrensalliance.org/4Download/health/cover_all_children_summary.pdf

Websites, resources and articles we've bookmarked -
<http://del.icio.us/childrensalliance/health>

Media coverage of children's health in Washington -
<http://childrensalliance.newsvine.com/health>

Quality and Funding for Early Learning

Summary of early learning investments in the final state budget 2007 - 2009 -
http://childrensalliance.org/4Download/earlylearning/summary_chart.pdf

Media coverage of early learning in Washington -
<http://childrensalliance.newsvine.com/early-learning>



Pictures from our events -
<http://flickr.com/photos/childrensalliance/sets/>



Video from our events -
<http://youtube.com/childrensalliance>

Improving Foster Care for All Children

Congressional report on inequity in the child welfare system -
<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07816.pdf>

Mockingbird Society -
<http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/>

Michigan State's Child Equity Report -
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/DHS-Child-Equity-Report_153952_7.pdf

More "Brain Fuel" for Hungry Children

Food Stamp Erosion in Washington -
http://childrensalliance.org/4Download/hunger/wa_erosion_rpt.pdf

Websites, resources and articles we've bookmarked -
<http://del.icio.us/childrensalliance/hunger>

Media coverage of hunger issues in Washington -
<http://childrensalliance.newsvine.com/hunger>



Photo by Amber Trillo