

NATIONAL NEWS

GREAT NEWS IN HEALTHCARE COVERAGE!

SCHIP REAUTHORIZATION BILL SIGNED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA HUGE WIN FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES



On Wednesday, February 4, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Bill. The bill ensures that the 7 million children currently enrolled through SCHIP will continue to receive critical healthcare coverage and expands coverage to an additional 4 million uninsured children nationwide. The bill extends SCHIP until 2013.

Other key provisions of the State Children's Health Insurance Program include:

- Is fully paid for, primarily with a 62-cent increase in the federal tobacco tax
- Encourages states to enroll children who are already eligible, but not yet covered, and gives states new tools to reach uninsured children
- Removes the five-year waiting period for legal immigrant children and pregnant women who enroll in Medicaid or SCHIP
- Improves the benefit package so that children who need dental care or mental healthcare can get those services.

PRESIDENT OBAMA RESCINDS AUGUST 17th, 2007 DIRECTIVE

On February 4, 2009, President Obama sent a memorandum to the “to-be-determined” Secretary of Health and Human Services ordering that the August 17th, 2007 directive from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) be rescinded. The CMS directive, addressed to State health officials, limited States’ flexibility in setting income eligibility standards for their SCHIP programs. The directive imposed additional requirements that States needed to meet in order to cover children under SCHIP plans, including plans that CMS had previously approved. The President pointed out that many thousands of children have been denied coverage as a result of the directive. His order is a huge step in the right direction to ensuring our children and families have access to healthcare coverage.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE NETWORK

NCKF NETWORK SECOND ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

National Covering Kids & Families Network hosted its Second Annual Meeting ~ *Realizing Our Vision Together* ~ on January 27th and 28th, 2009 in Washington, DC, convening 34 network participants from 18 states across the country. The focus of the Annual Meeting was on refining the NCKF Network's priorities and strategies for moving forward in 2009 and on building the Network's capacity to support the work towards quality healthcare coverage, expansion, outreach, simplification and coordination. The following issues were designated priority areas for 2009:

NCKF Priorities

Expansion

- SCHIP reauthorization
- Maximizing healthcare coverage proposal opportunities

Simplification

- Rescinding DRA/Medicaid citizenship document
- Streamlining and simplifying enrollment/retention systems in all States

Coordination

- Maximizing stimulus package opportunities
- Linking all healthcare coverage programs

Outreach

- Ensuring states have adequate outreach funding
- Ensuring states utilize best practices for healthcare coverage programs to be effective and efficient

NCKF 2009 FAMILY STORY CALENDAR

The National CKF Network released its 2009 *Calendar Committed to Health: Stories from Families Covered through the Healthcare Safety Net* in January. The Calendar is a great tool for organizations to use in educational visits with policymakers and press events. The Calendar tells the real life stories of hardworking families from California, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana and Utah who depend on the nation's public healthcare coverage programs. Their experiences, which were collected by members of the National Covering Kids & Families Network, tell the story of the value that healthcare coverage brings to families.

NCKF Network members presented the calendars to over 30 congressional and senate leaders during educational visits conducted between January 27th and 30th. During the meetings, members also shared the NCKF Network's vision, mission and priorities; discussed their own involvement with the Network; and described outreach, expansion, coordination and simplification activities in their own states.

Contact Michelle Wood, michelle@chc-inc.org, to request a copy of the NCKF Calendar.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MEET OUR NEW LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE



The NCKF Network introduced the following new Leadership Committee members at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

Judi Cramer (Southern Carolina) Chair: Leadership Committee
Deputy Director Program Design & Management Center; Southern Institute on Children and Families

Sonya Vasquez/Lark Galloway-Gilliam (California) Co-chair: Leadership Committee
Policy Director/Executive Director; Community Health Councils

Jodi Ray (Florida) Chair: Advocacy & Policy Committee
Project Director and Principal Investigator; Lawton and Rhea Childs Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies

Sandy Erb-Wilson (Ohio) Co-Chair: Advocacy & Policy Committee
Voices for Ohio's Children

Kathy Chan (Illinois) Chair: Communication Committee
Policy Director/Development Director; Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition

Korey Capozza (Utah) Co-Chair: Communication Committee
Voices for Utah Children

David Roos (Indiana) Chair: Education Committee
Executive Director; Covering Kids and Families of Indiana

Kyle Viator (Louisiana); Co-Chair: Education Committee
LaCHIP Director of Operation; Louisiana Department of Health and Hospital

Theresa Gavazzi (New York) - Chair: Membership Committee
Health Insurance Director; Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network, Binghamton, NY

Edwina Ducker (Maine) - Co-Chair: Membership Committee
Outreach Coordinator; Maine Primary Care Association



COMMITTEES SIGN UP TODAY!

Advocacy/Policy : For those who want to get involved in advocacy activities around SCHIP and Medicaid rule changes, this is the committee to join! Contact Jodi Ray of the Lawton and Rhea Childs Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies at jray@health.usf.edu

Communications: If you have creative talent and would like to write articles for the monthly newsletter, we are looking for writers and readers. Contact Kathy Chan with Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition via e-mail at kchan@ilmaternal.org.

Education: Conference planners and educators, join this committee! If you have a knack for planning educational teleconferences, contact David Roos of CKF Indiana at droos@ckfindiana.org.

Membership: This committee is moving and shaking and increasing our membership. If you like talking to people, here is your chance! Contact Theresa Gavazzi with Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network at tga-vazzi@mothersandbabies.org.

Credits: Sonya Vasquez and Catherine Sepulveda of Community Health Councils/California CKF. Edited by: Janice Taylor, Community Health Councils.