

September 6, 2017

Dear Members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation,

As organizations committed to improving health coverage for Illinois families, we respectfully urge you to pass a clean, five-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides \$454 million for an estimated 325,000 Illinois children enrolled in CHIP; these children are part of the larger umbrella All Kids Program, which covers approximately 1.5 million children. A clean extension should preserve the current maintenance of effort (MOE) and current funding levels, including the 23 percentage point increase in federal CHIP match (known as the CHIP bump), before funding expires on September 30, 2017. As noted, approximately 1.5 million Illinois children rely in part on CHIP funding for their current health coverage, which includes preventive care such as well-child checkups, developmental screenings, immunizations, behavioral health and dental care.¹ The health of these children and economic security of their families, as well as the short- and long-term fiscal health of the state of Illinois, will be put at risk if Congress does not act now to extend CHIP funding.

Illinois legislators have long recognized the benefits of ensuring that children have access to affordable, high quality health coverage. Republicans and Democrats representing our state in Congress have voted to continue funding CHIP since it was signed into law in 1997. As a result of this support, Illinois has emerged as a national leader of children's health coverage. Over the past 20 years, Illinois has maximized federal CHIP dollars to fund and successfully tailor the Illinois All Kids program to meet the needs of children who would otherwise lack affordable, comprehensive health insurance. Because of bipartisan support for CHIP, more than 325,000 Illinois children have access to comprehensive and high-quality health care. The uninsured rate for Illinois' children is just 2.5%--one of the lowest in the country.² By failing to extend CHIP funding, Congress could undermine two decades of investments aimed at assuring children's healthy development and success in school and life.³

Without CHIP funding, Illinois would also lose access to significant federal dollars—as much as \$454 million—a cost that we can ill afford to cover as the state continues to reel from our two-year long historic budget crisis.⁴ Still facing billions in unpaid bills, Illinois can hardly afford to lose valuable federal funds in the immediate future—but research also indicates that reducing access to health coverage for children could have a grave effect on our state's long-term fiscal outlook.⁵ Failing to meet children's health needs today prevents Illinois from reaping the long-term social and economic benefits associated with children's health coverage, including increased educational attainment and higher future earning potential.

Extending CHIP funding accomplishes the dual goals of limiting disruptions in care for children currently enrolled in the CHIP-funded Illinois All Kids program, and providing our state with increased budgetary stability. However, any legislation that includes structural changes to CHIP, such as reduced eligibility categories or decreased federal match rates, compromises Illinois'

ability to maintain coverage for children now enrolled in All Kids. Therefore, we call on you to pass a clean five-year extension of CHIP funding that preserves the current elements of the program in place.

We appreciate the longstanding bipartisan support that the Illinois Congressional delegation has provided CHIP. We urge you to honor your commitment to our state's youngest residents by investing in their health and passing a clean, five-year extension of CHIP funding.

Sincerely,

ACA Consumer Advocacy

Access Living

ACLU of Illinois

Action for a Better Tomorrow-Progressive Peoria

Action Illinois

Age Options

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Arc of Illinois

Champaign County Health Care Consumers

Citizen Action/Illinois

Community Behavioral Healthcare Association of Illinois

Cook County Health and Hospitals System

CU Indivisible

Ecker Center for Mental Health

Erie Family Health Center

Esperanza Health Centers

EverThrive Illinois

Family Voices of Illinois

Greater Chicago Food Depository

Healthcare Rights Coalition

Health & Disability Advocates
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living
Illinois Psychiatric Society
Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness
Indivisible 123GO
Indivisible Illinois
Indivisible Springfield
League of Women Voters of Illinois
Legal Council for Health Justice
Metropolitan Family Services
National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter
National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities (NOND)
NAMI Illinois
Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium
Organizing for Action-Springfield
Organizing Neighborhoods for Equality: Northside (ONE Northside)
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Peoria Healthcare Coalition
Planned Parenthood of Illinois
Prevent Blindness Illinois
Protect Our Care Illinois (POC-IL)

Rosecrance Health Network

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

Thresholds

Transitions of Western Illinois

United Way of Illinois

United Way of Metro Chicago

Young Invincibles

¹ Source: CMS, February 2017, Unduplicated Number of Children Ever Enrolled, <http://www.medicaid.gov/chip/downloads/fy-2016-childrens-enrollment-report.pdf> and MACPAC, 2017, analysis of CHIP Statistical Enrollment Data System (SEDS) data

<http://www.everthriveil.org/sites/default/files/docs/hr/CHIP%20ILLINOIS%20FACT%20SHEET%203.5.15.pdf>

² <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/location/illinois/>

³ Source: "Medicaid Is a Smart Investment in Children," Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, March 2017. <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2017/03/13/medicaid-is-a-smart-investment-in-children/>

⁴ Source: Estimates derived from figures in preliminary unpublished draft memo "CHIP Financing Considerations and State-level Funding and Coverage Loss Estimates," Georgetown University Center for Children and Families and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, October 2014.

<http://www.everthriveil.org/sites/default/files/docs/hr/CHIP%20ILLINOIS%20FACT%20SHEET%203.5.15.pdf>

⁵ Source: Bill Backlog, State of Illinois Comptroller, Office of Susana A. Mendoza, August 28, 2017.

<http://ledger.illinoiscomptroller.gov/fiscal-condition/#bill-backlog>