

May 20, 2011

Dear House and Senate Budget Negotiators,

As advocates for diverse communities across Washington State, we continue to oppose the Senate's approach to Apple Health for Kids.

These cuts are profoundly unjust. They penalize a group of children for circumstances beyond their control. The effects will be felt among some of the poorest kids in our state: children whose lack of opportunities for education and health will put them well behind life's starting line. These kids are all too frequently children of color.

Because a child's educational achievement depends on her health, Apple Health for Kids plays a key role in fulfilling the state's duty to educate its children. Prevention is the best cost containment. For the cost of a single admission to the hospital ER for an asthma attack, we can provide coverage through Apple Health for Kids to a child for nearly two years.

With a single, streamlined enrollment process and the same benefits for all kids, the efficiencies in Apple Health for Kids will earn the state \$80 million from the federal government over 2011-2013. This bonus award is more than four times greater than the savings assumed in the Senate approach.

Some legislators are defending the Senate's approach to Apple Health for Kids by deploying the word "reform." Genuine reform makes something more efficient, transparent or fair. Taking health care away from poor, undocumented children is not reform -- it's a giant leap backwards.

We urge you to reject the cuts in the Senate's budget and SB 5929, and to adopt the approach that the House and Senate agreed on: raising premiums on undocumented families who are most likely to afford it, those that are 200% of the federal poverty level and above; and allowing financial sponsorships to help ensure that cost isn't a barrier to health care.

The state budget is a moral document. A common value holds true across our state, in every community: that children should be protected from harm. We urge you to join us in standing strong for Apple Health for Kids in good times and in bad.

Sincerely,

- 🍏 Alinza Student Coalition/The Hispanic/Latino@ Student Alliance
- 🍏 American Federation of Teachers- Washington
- 🍏 Asian Counseling & Referral Service
- 🍏 Asia Pacific Cultural Center
- 🍏 Asian Pacific Islander Coalition Against Tobacco
- 🍏 Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Pierce County
- 🍏 Casa Latina
- 🍏 Catholic Community Services of Western Washington.
- 🍏 Cedar River Group
- 🍏 Center for MultiCultural Health
- 🍏 Children's Alliance
- 🍏 Community to Community Development
- 🍏 El Centro de la Raza
- 🍏 El Comité Pro-Reforma Migratoria y Justicia Social
- 🍏 Entre Hermanos
- 🍏 Filipino Community of Seattle
- 🍏 Foster Promise
- 🍏 Health for All
- 🍏 InterIm Community Development Association
- 🍏 Kip Tokuda
- 🍏 Latino Civic Alliance
- 🍏 Latino Community Fund
- 🍏 League of Education Voters
- 🍏 Lutheran Community Services Northwest
- 🍏 Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State
- 🍏 Minority Executive Directors Coalition
- 🍏 National Association of Social Workers – Washington Chapter
- 🍏 Nonprofit Assistance Center
- 🍏 Northwest Health Law Advocates
- 🍏 Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
- 🍏 OneAmerica
- 🍏 Statewide Poverty Action Network
- 🍏 Public Health - Seattle & King County
- 🍏 Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans
- 🍏 Puget Sound Sage
- 🍏 Ralph DeCristoforo, Spokane Community Advocate
- 🍏 Sea Mar Community Health Centers
- 🍏 Seattle Office for Civil Rights
- 🍏 SEIU Healthcare 1199NW
- 🍏 SEIU Healthcare 775NW
- 🍏 SEIU Local 6
- 🍏 SEIU Local 925
- 🍏 UFCW Local 141
- 🍏 UFCW Local 367
- 🍏 UFCW Local 1439
- 🍏 UFCW Washington State United Council
- 🍏 Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- 🍏 Washington Community Action Network (WA CAN)
- 🍏 Washington Dental Service Foundation
- 🍏 Washington Education Association
- 🍏 Washington State Hospital Association
- 🍏 Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
- 🍏 Washington State Nurses Association
- 🍏 WPEA (UFCW 365)

Cc: State Senators, State Representatives, Staff

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