

Health Coalition for Children and Youth

American Academy of Pediatrics,
Washington Chapter

American Lung Association of
Washington

American Diabetes Association

CHOICE Regional Health Network

Children's Alliance

Children's Home Society of
Washington

Children's Hospital and Regional
Medical Center

Communities Connect

Community Health Network of
Washington

Community Health Plan

Group Health Cooperative

King County Project Access

Inland Northwest Health Services

Lutheran Public Policy Office of
Washington State

March of Dimes, Washington State
Chapter

Mary Bridge Children's Hospital

Molina Healthcare of Washington

National Association of Pediatric
Nurse Practitioners, WA Chapter

National Association of Social
Workers, Washington State
Chapter

Northwest Health Law Advocates

Northwest International Health
Action Coalition

Public Health - Seattle & King
County

Sacred Heart Children's Hospital

Swedish Medical Center

School Nurse Organization of
Washington

Service Employees International
Union 1199 NW

Solid Ground

Statewide Poverty Action Network

Washington Association of
Churches

Washington Association of
Community and Migrant Health
Centers

Washington Community Action
Network

Washington Dental Service
Foundation

Washington Health Foundation

Washington State Nurses
Association

Washington State Hospital
Association

Washington State Labor Council,
AFL-CIO

Washington State Oral Health
Coalition

WithinReach (formerly *Healthy
Mothers, Healthy Babies*)

Yakima County Health Care
Coalition

State Children's Health Insurance Program

Reauthorize SCHIP with adequate funds to cover eligible children and parents and permanently fix Washington State's funding inequity.

With Washington State about to implement legislation to ensure affordable coverage for all children in the state, Congress has an opportunity to reinforce this commitment to children. Reauthorizing SCHIP and allowing Washington State to maximize federal funding would help cover at a minimum an additional 15,000 to 35,000 low-income children.

We urge Congress to:

- *Reauthorize SCHIP;*
- *Include an additional \$50 billion in program funding over five years to cover eligible uninsured children and parents that does not jeopardize access or coverage for other vulnerable populations;*
- *Secure a permanent fix to the funding formula that has limited Washington State's ability to maximize federal funding to cover children while maintaining Washington's funding formula and SCHIP federal matching rate; and*
- *Support the Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act (ICHIA) to provide SCHIP coverage to legally present immigrant children in the US awaiting citizenship.*

Broad Public Support. A recent poll by *The New York Times* and CBS News indicated that 84% of Americans support expanding SCHIP to cover all uninsured children. Broad national and state-wide coalitions are pushing for adequate funds to achieve this goal as a part of program reauthorization.

Proven Program Success. SCHIP has succeeded in increasing access to quality health care for low-income children. Over the past decade, the national uninsured rate among low-income children has dropped from 22% to below 15% - a one-third decrease. In Washington State the rate of uninsured children declined by 25,000 from 2004-2006 to just 4.4% of all children.

Washington State Penalized for Early Coverage Expansions. A provision in the SCHIP statute prevents Washington (and 10 other states that expanded coverage prior to SCHIP's creation in 1997) from using any of their SCHIP allotments to cover existing program costs. Instead, these states are penalized and must return any unused SCHIP funds to the U.S. Treasury.¹

Before SCHIP was established, Washington had an SCHIP-like Medicaid program that covered children above the federally-mandated income level – to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). SCHIP statute

prevents Washington from using its SCHIP allotment to cover any children already enrolled in its SCHIP-like Medicaid program. At the same time, children living at the exact same poverty level can be enrolled in SCHIP in the 40 states that did **not** expand coverage before SCHIP mandated it. Some states also benefit from the redistribution of millions of unused dollars that Washington is required to return to the U.S. Treasury. Since the program's inception Washington has returned \$179 million - funds that were then redistributed to other states, and more than enough to fund coverage for all 73,000 uninsured Washington children.

Making the SCHIP Fix Permanent. Congress approved temporary SCHIP 'fixes' for fiscal years 2004, 2006, and 2007 – securing over \$50 million that has allowed Washington to cover Medicaid children rather than revert funds to the federal government. This funding also allowed state policymakers to eliminate Medicaid premiums that would have pushed 25,000 children off the program, and has paved the way for state approval of comprehensive legislation to ensure access to coverage for all children in Washington by 2010. Washington's Congressional delegation is joining other lawmakers in seeking a permanent fix to the funding formula during this year's reauthorization.

¹ These other states include Tennessee, New Mexico, Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Wisconsin.