



**CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE**  
*A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families*

## **For Immediate Release**

### **CONTACTS:**

**Jon Gould, Deputy Director**, (206) 324-0340 x19, cell: (206) 683-2674, [jon@childrensalliance.org](mailto:jon@childrensalliance.org)  
**Liz Arjun, Health Policy Associate**, (206) 324-0340 x21, cell: 206-491-1267, [liz@childrensalliance.org](mailto:liz@childrensalliance.org)  
**Ruth Schubert, Communications Manager**, (206) 324-0340 x18, cell: (206) 498-0185, [ruth@childrensalliance.org](mailto:ruth@childrensalliance.org)

# **Federal budget gives Washington State \$23 million for children's health**

*More than enough to cover 15,433 children on waiting list*

**February 14, 2006 (Seattle)** – The federal budget signed into law this month includes \$23 million in new federal funds for children's health coverage. This new money, added to the state's children's health budget, is more than enough to offer health coverage now to thousands of immigrant children who will otherwise have to wait until at least July 2007, said Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children's Alliance.

"We now have the money to allow these children to see a doctor today—not 1 ½ years from now," Gould said. "Legislators need to do the right thing by using this money as it was intended: to get needed health coverage to children. Health care delayed is health care denied."

The waiting list for the Children's Health Program, which covers immigrant children not eligible for Medicaid, continues to grow. **As of Feb. 10, the waiting list included 15,433 children.**

While lawmakers restored the Children's Health Program last year, they provided only enough funding to cover 8,800 children over the next 1½ years. As a result, the state pulled random applications from those received by the deadline to fill the 4,300 slots available in the program now.

"We know who these children are and where they are," Gould said. "Now that the state has the money, we should cover all eligible children who applied. Children's health care shouldn't be subject to a lottery."

The cost of covering all eligible children who apply this biennium is \$18.7 million.

The \$23 million in federal money comes as additional matching funds for part of the children's Medicaid program administered by the state. Added to the overall children's health budget, these funds free up the money needed to take care of the inadequate number of slots for immigrant children's health care coverage.

The Children's Alliance also is urging lawmakers to invest in education campaigns to inform eligible families about available health care programs for their children and simplify administration of the children's Medicaid program through centralized eligibility determination.

For more details about the children's health coverage in Washington State and the policy steps needed to cover all children by 2010, please refer to the Children Alliance's January, 2006 report: "[Responding to the Crisis: Full Health Coverage for Washington's Children.](#)"

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*For more than twenty years, the Children's Alliance has advocated for children, youth and families in Washington. The Alliance has 128 organizational members, and more than 6,500 individual members statewide. For a [list of member organizations](#) and to learn more about the Children's Alliance, go to: [www.childrensalliance.org](http://www.childrensalliance.org)*