



## COLORADO CENTER on LAW & POLICY

Justice and Economic Security for *all* Coloradans

### **Do you support health insurance for kids?** **Then contact your U.S. Senators and Representative Right Now!**

This week, Congress is expected to vote on reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP), in order to have the legislation ready for President-elect Obama's signature on Inauguration Day or soon after. **Action is needed now to ensure that Colorado's Senators and Representatives vote in favor of strong SCHIP legislation. Congress must act now to strengthen health care for millions of kids—including more than 60,000 in Colorado.**

After a long battle in 2007 and two vetoes, SCHIP was temporarily extended until March 2009. Currently, CHIP covers more than 7 million low-income children nationally and over 60,000 low-income children and pregnant women in Colorado. **Reauthorizing the health insurance program is expected to expand coverage to more low-income children in Colorado and throughout the U.S.**

Since its creation in 1997, SCHIP has been one of the most effective public programs, credited with helping reduce the uninsured rate among children by almost a third – even as uninsured rates for adults increased steadily.

With more people losing their jobs (unemployment has increased 2% in the last year in Colorado), more people are losing health care, and that means more kids are going without health care. SCHIP can help prevent that. For every 1 percentage point increase in Colorado's unemployment rate, more than 19,000 adults become uninsured, while fewer than 900 children become uninsured. The difference is due primarily to SCHIP, which provides a critical safety net for children during times of economic downturn.

**In this national economic crisis, it is crucial that Congress take swift action to reauthorize SCHIP and strengthen this essential safety net for low-income children.**

### **Contact your U.S. Senators and Representative and ask them to support SCHIP Reauthorization!**

Senator Mark Udall, (202) 224-5941, [Senator\\_Mark\\_Udall@markudall.senate.gov](mailto:Senator_Mark_Udall@markudall.senate.gov)  
Senator Ken Salazar, (202) 224-5852, <http://salazar.senate.gov/contact/email.cfm>

Congressman Mike Coffman (6<sup>th</sup> District)  
(202) 225-7882  
Email: <https://forms.house.gov/coffman/contact-form.shtml>

Congresswoman Diana DeGette (1<sup>st</sup> District)  
(202) 225-4431  
Email: [http://www.house.gov/formdegette/zip\\_auth.htm](http://www.house.gov/formdegette/zip_auth.htm)

Congressman Doug Lamborn (5<sup>th</sup> District)  
(202) 225-4422  
Email: <http://lamborn.house.gov/ZipAuth.aspx>

Congresswoman Betsy Markey (4<sup>th</sup> District)  
(202) 225-4676

Email: <https://forms.house.gov/betsymarkey/contact-form.shtml>

Congressman Ed Perlmutter (7<sup>th</sup> District)  
(202) 225-2645

Email: [http://perlmutter.house.gov/IMA/issue\\_subscribe.htm](http://perlmutter.house.gov/IMA/issue_subscribe.htm)

Congressman Jared Polis (2<sup>nd</sup> District)  
(202) 225-2161

Email: <https://forms.house.gov/polis/contact-form.shtml>

Congressman John Salazar (3<sup>rd</sup> District)  
(202) 225-4761

Email: <http://www.house.gov/salazar/contact.shtml>

Don't know who your U.S. Representative is? Find out here: <http://www.house.gov/>

### **What to say to your U.S. Senator and Representative:**

**Please support SCHIP Reauthorization legislation and any strengthening amendments that**

Provides adequate, long-term, federal funding to allow Colorado to enroll all eligible children and pregnant women and to expand its program to additional low-income uninsured children and pregnant women. Currently, Colorado's SCHIP program, the Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+) covers 59,004 children and 1,557 pregnant women. We need to do more!

Eliminates the inequities in SCHIP and Medicaid created by the five year waiting period for legal immigrants. The five year waiting requirement for legal immigrants denies health care to children and it must be eliminated.

**Health care is important to all children and to our economy**

Children with health insurance are more likely to have a usual source of health care, to have seen a doctor in the previous year, and to have their health care needs met than their uninsured counterparts. When children get the health care they need, they are better equipped to do well in school because they can do things like attend school regularly, see the chalkboard, hear the teacher, and participate in classroom and recess activities—all essential parts of succeeding in school.

Colorado has the fastest growing rate of child poverty in the country—SCHIP can help turn the tide on that and provide more kids with the health care they need.

If reauthorized, SCHIP could reduce the number of uninsured children nationally by two-thirds.

**Tell Your U.S. Senators and Representative:  
Vote YES to Strengthen Health Insurance for Kids!  
Vote YES on any strengthening amendments!  
Vote YES on SCHIP Reauthorization!**