



## **PROTECT CHILDREN'S HEALTH COVERAGE**

As part of the Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP) debate, Senate Minority Leader Skelos and Assembly Minority Leader Kohl propose to reduce Child Health Plus (CHPlus) eligibility in New York. This proposal, if enacted, would leave tens of thousands of children living in working families without health care. We urge the Legislature to REJECT proposals to eliminate access to health insurance for New York's children.

### **Child Health Plus is the Right Investment**

It is critically important that vulnerable children have access to essential health services so they can lead full and productive lives. Uninsured children are ten times more likely than insured children to have unmet medical needs. These children are less likely to receive immunizations, dental and vision care as well as medical care for ear infections, diabetes and asthma. State and Federal lawmakers have demonstrated their commitment to investing in children by providing affordable and comprehensive health coverage to nearly every child in New York through the expansion of Child Health Plus.

Now, this short-sighted and ill-timed cost-cutting proposal threatens to undermine the State's pledge to ensure children's health care. During these tough economic times, as parents lose their jobs and employers increasingly fail to provide coverage for children, families have turned to the State's public health insurance programs to access their health care. If Child Health Plus eligibility levels are cut, nearly 35,000 children will lose immediate access to this critical safety net.

### **Child Health Plus is Cost Effective**

Providing insurance coverage for children is also cost-effective for New York State. The Federal government matches \$0.65 on every State dollar spent in the CHPlus program and, with Federal health reform, this Federal matching could increase to \$0.88 on every State dollar. New York would leave significant Federal funds on the table by reducing eligibility levels in CHPlus. Coverage of children in Child Health Plus is nominal compared to the costs to the health system overall if families are forced to turn to emergency rooms for their children's care or require more intensive treatments after delaying care.

Members of the New York State Legislature have said that they do not want to balance the state budget on the backs of health care providers. The legacy of this Extraordinary Session should not be balancing the budget on the backs of New York's children.

**The Coalition of New York State Public Health Plans and the Children's Defense Fund urge our Legislators to REJECT proposals to cut Child Health Plus eligibility levels.**

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