

Suggested Messaging on Children in Health Care Reform

Value:

For health care reform to be viewed as a success it must ensure that everyone has access to high-quality, affordable coverage -- that includes the millions of children who remain uninsured or who aren't getting the care they need to grow and thrive.

- We have made huge gains for children through the successful Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, which serve as the cornerstone of coverage for many of America's children. But millions of children remain uninsured because they cannot afford coverage or because their families face red-tape barriers to signing them up.
- Many children – including many with an insurance card-- are not receiving the care they need to help launch them on an upward trajectory toward a successful adulthood.

Barrier:

Proposals currently on the table could risk the stability of the highly-effective Medicaid and CHIP programs; fail to take the necessary steps to eliminate red tape and make it simpler for parents to navigate the options for their children; and don't fully address the unique health care needs of children in efforts to improve the health care delivery system.

Ask:

- **Do no harm to children.** Health reform should not turn back the clock on the progress our nation has achieved for children's health coverage. Nearly one-third of our nation's children get their health care through Medicaid and CHIP. Before making any changes to these successful programs, Congress should make sure that vulnerable children don't fall through the cracks during the transition phase and should ensure that children receive comparable benefits at an affordable price under any new program.
- **Insure all kids.** Six million of the nation's nine million uninsured children are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP. Eliminating red tape and bureaucracy by simplifying enrollment would be the cheapest, quickest and smartest first step to get most of our children covered. Parents should have hassle-free ways to sign their children up for insurance.
- **Cover Kids from Head to Toe.** All children need coverage that meets their unique developmental needs, and provides them with the preventive services, medical care, and oral and mental health benefits needed to launch them on a better trajectory in life.

Vision:

There are no do-overs for childhood. Let's make sure Congress gets health reform right the first time. For health reform to be truly successful, it must ensure that all of our children have high-quality, affordable coverage.