

Sample Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

I applaud the focus that the editors have given to covering the vital work that our leaders are doing in Washington to bring about long-needed national health care reform.

There has been one big issue that has not been addressed in your coverage that is of critical importance to STATE families and our children. That is ensuring that recent gains made in covering millions of uninsured children are not eroded in the process.

Our nation [OR STATE] has made huge gains for children through the successful CHIP and Medicaid programs [STATE PROGRAM], which serve as the cornerstone of coverage for many of STATE'S children. Yet too many children remain uninsured because they cannot afford coverage or because their families face red-tape barriers when attempting to sign them up.

President Obama stated that he believes health care should be guided by a simple principle: fix what's broken and build on what works. I think we all agree with that. That is why proposals currently being considered by Congress that could risk much of what we've achieved to create stable coverage for children are deeply troubling.

There are no do-overs for childhood. Congress must get health reform right the first time. There is still ample time to get it right. To do so they must:

- **Do no harm to children.** Our leaders must ensure that benefits in any other new coverage option are the same as those they currently receive in Medicaid and CHIP.
- **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.
- **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.

For health reform to be truly successful, it must ensure that all of our children have high quality, affordable care.

Mary Smith
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