

THE UTAH HEALTH POLICY PROJECT

HEALTH MATTERS

Utah *Health Matters* Action Alert!

June 19, 2007

Hello Health Advocates!

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1. CHIP in Trouble in Congress: Now is the time to Act for Kids

Please take the time to contact Sen. Hatch and Gov. Huntsman (we will need his help to reach Sen. Hatch-read on for details). The most important question in SCHIP Re-authorization (amount of funding) will likely be decided THIS WEEK. **SENATOR HATCH & Gov. Huntsman NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU IN THE NEXT 2-3 DAYS. Right now Sen. Hatch does *not* support the full \$50 billion that is needed to address the growing crisis of uninsured children.**

Message for Senator Hatch:

UHPP joins Voices for Utah Children in **calling on all advocates and friends of children to contact Senator Hatch and urge him to support the *Chip Reauthorization Act of 2007*. S. 1224, authorizes the highest levels to provide health insurance for the six million children currently insured through the SCHIP, it also provides funds to cover an additional three million children who are eligible, but do not have coverage.**

Contact information for Senator Hatch:

To send an Email click on this



Call or [E-mail](#) Senator Hatch Today!

1-800-828-0498

Urge them to protect children's health by supporting SCHIP!

Now is the time to contact Senator Hatch and urge him to support S. 1224 and its key provision to fulfill the commitment of \$50 billion in new funding and retain state flexibility.

Congress should (*Talking Points* for Sen. Hatch and Gov Huntsman)...

- **Deliver on the pledge of \$50 billion in new funding.** This is the minimum amount of money states need to sustain their existing SCHIP programs and move forward to cover more uninsured children. All children in Utah and across the nation should have health care coverage and access to the health care services they need.
- **Reauthorize SCHIP well before September 30, 2007 to avoid unnecessary and harmful disruptions in state programs.** SCHIP reauthorization should be quick, clean, and unencumbered by provisions that would jeopardize timely action.
- **Provide states with new tools and financial support to cover more children, including:**
 - The option to provide SCHIP and Medicaid coverage to those legal immigrant children and pregnant women who currently cannot be covered until they have been in the country for five years.
 - The option to cover pregnant women through SCHIP without relying on waivers.
 - More tools to reach children who are already eligible for, but not enrolled in, SCHIP or Medicaid, including "Express Lane Eligibility" to help get children enrolled when they apply for other programs.
 - Relief from the red-tape intensive federal mandate to document citizenship status in Medicaid.
 - For states that make significant strides in enrolling more children or that have and maintain high participation rates, additional federal support for the coverage costs that result.
- **Make certain that no one loses coverage.** Funding for covering uninsured children through the SCHIP program should not come from cuts to other programs or populations that are currently covered. It would be a travesty if SCHIP reauthorization wound up increasing the number of uninsured Americans.

The people of Utah believe overwhelmingly - regardless of political ideology, income or circumstance - that we have a moral obligation to cover children in need and SCHIP is the vehicle they believe in. A poll in January found 87 percent of Governor Huntsman's proposal to invest additional state funds in CHIP so that it can cover more children, and 88 percent agreeing that CHIP is a responsible way to invest in Utah's future.

(thanks to Voices for Utah Children for above material)

Message for Gov Huntsman

Please click on this link and fill out the feedback form:

http://governor.utah.gov/goca/form_governor.html

Or, call (801) 538-1000

Use the talking points above. Also remind the Governor that his own initiative to cover all children (and families employed by small businesses) will not go very far unless Congress fully

re-authorizes CHIP at the \$50 billion level.

2. Interim Day at the Legislature

It looks like June interim will be relatively uneventful on the Medicaid front. As always, however, this is just the calm before the storm. Rest assured that we here at the Health Policy Project will not be taking a summer vacation.

First up is the fiscal year 2008 Medicaid budget hearing this Thursday from 4-6 p.m. in Room 114 at the Department of Health. This is your chance to ask the Department to strongly advocate for the programs and services critical to you and your family. Building on last year's success, UHPP's recommendations will focus on managing costs and improving quality by increasing access to primary and preventive care.

Immediately on the heels of the budget hearing will be the public hearing on the proposed rules implementing the Preferred Drug List (PDL) in Utah Medicaid. To read the rules visit <http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/bulletin/2007/20070501/29807.htm> and <http://www.rules.utah.gov/publicat/bulletin/2007/20070501/29808.htm>

To read UHPP's comments on the rules see:

http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/Publications_files/Medicaid/PDLPublicCommentFINAL5-30-07.pdf

The hearing will again take place in Room 114 Room at the Department of Health on June 25 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. UHPP's testimony will highlight the need to vigorously enforce the regulations around the "dispense-as-written" clause.

Also attached is a draft of a sign-on letter addressed to the Department requesting that it create an entity to ensure that advocates and enrollees have a strong voice in the ongoing PDL design and implementation process. The entity would serve in an advisory capacity to the Drug Utilization Review Board. If you or your organization would like to sign on to the request, please call 801 433-2299 or e-mail Andrew@healthpolicyproject.org no later than 11 a.m. Wednesday, June 20.

3. Health Policy Calendar

Keep up to date on all events and activities related to health policy and covering the uninsured by visiting:

<http://www.healthpolicyproject.org/UHPP/calendar.html>

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