

CHIP Funding Delay Threatens Children's Health Care

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) covers 9 million children across the nation. On September 30, 2017, federal CHIP funding expired — the first time funding has expired in the program's history. As a result, states are now spending down reserves and moving to cut off new enrollments as a first step to shutting down their CHIP programs. To protect the health care received by 9 million kids, Congress needs to vote to fund CHIP now.

Here are six reasons CHIP deserves the nation's continued support:

1. CHIP helps working families with modest

incomes. CHIP covers kids in low and modest income families that earn too much for Medicaid. Nearly 90 percent of children in CHIP are in families earning 200 percent of poverty or less (\$40,480 for a family of three).

2. CHIP offers high-quality, affordable coverage specifically for kids.

CHIP benefits are designed to cover services critical to children's development that often are excluded in other coverage, like speech therapy, pediatric dental, and hearing services. CHIP ensures coverage is affordable by requiring that combined premiums and cost-sharing cannot exceed 5 percent of family income.

3. CHIP is an example of a bipartisan program that works.

When it passed in 1997 and ever since, CHIP has enjoyed support from lawmakers of both parties.

4. CHIP covers kids in every state.

CHIP is a federal-state partnership in which every state participates. The federal government reimburses states at a

generous, state-specific matching rate that ranges from 88 to 100 cents on the dollar. Each state's funding is capped and given to states in annual allotments based on their recent CHIP spending. Federal funding must periodically be extended — however, because Congress has not acted, states may have to close their programs when their allotments are exhausted. That puts health coverage for millions of children at risk.

5. CHIP is an investment in America's future.

Children's health, school performance, and future success in life are all linked. Investing in children's coverage programs, like CHIP, helps children stay healthy so they can do well in school. Our investment in CHIP is an investment in children's success later in life.

6. Today, almost all children in the U.S. have health coverage — but that wouldn't be true without CHIP.

When CHIP was passed, 15 percent of all children in the U.S. were uninsured. Today, it is 5 percent.

Both parties must come together now and pass a bill that doesn't play politics with children's health coverage. *That means a bill that funds CHIP at current levels for at least 5 years.* America's families deserve security in their children's health coverage.