Renewing our Commitment to Children's Health

Our country has made a historic commitment to covering kids through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which together have brought the rate of uninsured children to record lows. But our job is not done. As we work to improve health coverage in the United States, we must renew our commitment to children's health to ensure all children receive the care they need when they need it so they can grow into healthy, productive adults. This work will only be successful when all children have **comprehensive**, **affordable**, and **continuous** coverage that ensures **access** to high **quality** care. Leaders must continue to improve and protect children's coverage, guided by all of the following interrelated principles:

- **All children and pregnant women need <u>comprehensive</u>, age-appropriate benefits that ensure healthy child development.** All children must have access to age-appropriate benefits, modeled after Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit, with preventive services equivalent to those outlined in the Bright Futures guidelines and appropriate services for children with special health care needs. Pregnant women must have access to quality care consistent with the *Guidelines for Perinatal Care* jointly issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- **Families need access to <u>affordable</u> health care**. All sources of health coverage, both public and private, must be affordable for families so children and pregnant women can get the care they need without jeopardizing their families' financial security.

- **All children and pregnant women should have <u>continuous</u>, consistent coverage with no gaps in care.** Families should experience a simple, user-friendly process to sign up and stay enrolled, regardless of their coverage type (e.g. Medicaid, CHIP, or private insurance). If

family income or other circumstances result in a change in coverage (e.g. between CHIP and private plans), children must continue to have seamless access to providers and services necessary to meet their needs.

- **Children and pregnant women need access to a full range of providers to get the health services they need when they need them.** Pediatric and maternity provider networks must be accessible and robust and include pediatric subspecialty care, regardless of coverage type.

- **All children and pregnant women must receive high quality care.** Children and pregnant women should have access to coordinated care and a medical home. All health plans should be required to report on national pediatric and maternal health-specific quality measures to assess the quality of care on an ongoing basis.

Good health care for children and pregnant women relies on the stability and sustainability of Medicaid and CHIP, which serve as the bedrock of coverage for low-income children, children with complex or chronic medical conditions, and pregnant women. We must build on what is already working for millions of children and their families by keeping Medicaid and CHIP strong.

Endorsing Organizations:
American Academy of Pediatrics, Children's Defense Fund, Children's Hospital Association, Family Voices, First Focus, Georgetown Center for Children and Families, March of Dimes

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