



September 21, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Senator Tammy Baldwin  
The Honorable Senator Ron Johnson  
The Honorable Congressman Mark Pocan  
The Honorable Congressman Ron Kind

The Honorable Congresswoman Gwen Moore  
The Honorable Congressman James Sensenbrenner  
The Honorable Congressman Glenn Grothman  
The Honorable Congressman Sean Duffy  
The Honorable Congressman Mike Gallagher

Dear Wisconsin Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of over 50 organizations committed to the health and well-being of Wisconsin children and families, we urge you to reauthorize stable, long-term funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP provides a vital source of support for children's access to quality, affordable health care that keeps kids and families healthy. In September, we hope you will pass a clean five-year extension of CHIP so we can continue to provide healthcare for Wisconsin kids without further burdening the Medicaid budget.

For 20 years CHIP has enjoyed strong, bipartisan support. There is no reason why that should not continue, and we were pleased to see that a bipartisan plan was developed by Senators Hatch and Wyden. Congress should pass a five-year reauthorization to provide continuity and stability to providers and state lawmakers. Families also need funding reauthorized by September 30, 2017, so they do not live in doubt over whether their children will have health care in the months ahead.

Medicaid and CHIP are designed to work in partnership. Together they have helped ensure that 97 percent of Wisconsin kids have access to the health care they need, while also helping to stabilize Wisconsin's budget. Medicaid and CHIP provide critical health coverage to about 500,000 Wisconsin children. Both programs are needed to help ensure that every kid has a chance to grow up healthy and succeed in life.

Medicaid and CHIP offer free or low-cost health coverage for kids, and cover important services like doctor and dentist visits, immunizations, prescriptions, hospital visits and more. They are a lifeline for working families in Wisconsin who are not offered or cannot afford health insurance on their own.

Governor Walker expressed his support for the last reauthorization of CHIP funding in 2015. His letter states that Wisconsin's CHIP allotment represents "an important component of funding the state devotes to health coverage for low income children. It is crucial to provide states with predictable funding levels in the coming years."

Reauthorization of the CHIP program is extremely important for Wisconsin. If federal support for CHIP is significantly reduced, state legislators in Wisconsin could face a huge hole in the Medicaid budget that they would have to close either by making significant spending cuts or raising taxes.

Reauthorization should preserve the federal CHIP funding “bump” and the maintenance of effort requirements for states. The Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement ensures that children have consistent, stable access to health insurance, giving their families peace of mind. It prevents states from taking steps that would limit kids’ coverage through CHIP or Medicaid. The 23 percentage point “bump” has allowed states to provide access to coverage for more kids and expand eligibility and services so more kids can get the care they need. Eliminating it would create a hole in the state budget of about \$73 million per year. The MOE standards and enhanced CHIP funding ensure that the quality, affordable health coverage families depend on for their kids is secure and stable.

When children have consistent access to coverage, they can get ongoing care, including checkups and preventive screenings that help them grow up healthy and go to school ready to learn. Putting these additional federal dollars into CHIP allows states to use more of their own funds to invest in other programs that can also improve the lives of kids and families.

The past 20 years have shown that CHIP works. It supports children in families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but don’t have access to affordable coverage. It’s an effective way to cover kids at the lowest cost and gives Wisconsin the flexibility to run programs that work best for them.

Wisconsin has been a leading state in ensuring access to quality health care for kids. We must not make budget cuts that leave kids worse off. The time is now to pass a five-year funding extension that does not change the program or reverse improvements we’ve made, allowing us to keep and build upon the gains Wisconsin has made in covering kids.

Thank you for your attention to this extremely important issue for Wisconsin children and for the financing of our BadgerCare program.

Sincerely,

Wisconsin Council of Churches  
Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools  
Wisconsin Medical Society  
Kids Forward  
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups  
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Wisconsin Education Association Council  
Medical College of Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association  
UW Health - American Family Children's Hospital  
9to5 Milwaukee  
ABC for Health, Inc.  
Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin  
Citizen Action of Wisconsin

Community Advocates, Inc.  
Community Advocates Public Policy Institute  
Congregations United to Serve Humanity  
Disability Rights Wisconsin  
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin  
Easterseals Southeast Wisconsin  
Family Voices of Wisconsin  
GRandparents United for Madison Public Schools  
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation  
Latino Children and Families Council  
Linda and Gene Farley Wisconsin Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program  
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin  
Madison-area Urban Ministry  
Mental Health America of Wisconsin  
Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force  
NAMI Dane County  
NAMI Greater Milwaukee  
NAMI Wisconsin  
National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter  
One Wisconsin Now  
Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin  
The Arc of Wisconsin  
SEIU Health Care Wisconsin  
Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations  
Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health  
Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies  
Wisconsin Association of School Nurses  
Wisconsin Board for People with Development Disabilities  
Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers  
Wisconsin Community Action Program Association  
Wisconsin Democracy Campaign  
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
Wisconsin Family Ties  
Wisconsin Head Start Association  
Wisconsin Jewish Conference  
Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group  
Wisconsin Voices  
WISDOM

cc: Linda Seemeyer, Secretary, Department of Health Services  
Michael Heifetz, Medicaid Director