



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

Increase Enrollment Levels of Eligible SCHIP Children *Cosponsor the Healthy Kids One Stop Act*

Dear Colleague,

Florida's number of uninsured children is embarrassing! According to recent reports based upon the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, Florida ranks 2nd in the nation for the percentage of children in the state without health insurance (19.1 percent) and 3rd for our actual number of uninsured children (approximately 800,000)¹. This data also shows that 60.7 percent of Florida's uninsured children come from families most likely to be eligible for public assistance.

There are a variety of explanations or excuses as to why our State compares so poorly to the rest of the U.S.: the SCHIP enrollment process can be lengthy and complex, a family may lack transportation to the site of enrollment, or, most often, there is a general lack of awareness about the program itself.

In an effort to increase the enrollment level of children eligible for SCHIP, I am introducing the *Healthy Kids One Stop Act* today, and I ask you to cosponsor this legislation with me.

This measure seeks to remove barriers to families eligible to enroll in SCHIP by giving states the option to combine or streamline the enrollment process for SCHIP coverage with another government agency that provides some form of assistance to low-income children. For example, a State may opt to merge the application process for the National School Lunch Program with that of SCHIP. As a result, the parent would not have to resupply information that has already been provided to the State.

Authorized agencies that determine eligibility for assistance under the following statutes and programs would be considered qualified to serve as agencies for SCHIP enrollment:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- The State Medicaid plan
- The State CHIP plan
- Head Start Act
- The supplemental nutrition assistance program (Food and Nutrition Act of 2008)
- Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act
- The Child Nutrition Act of 1966
- The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990
- The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act
- The United States Housing Act of 1937
- The Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996

No matter which side of the aisle you sit, we can all agree that making SCHIP available to those children already eligible is of great importance. Simplifying the SCHIP process and allowing for accessible enrollment makes great policy sense. In light of this week's SCHIP agenda, I encourage you to cosponsor this measure to demonstrate your support for our State's uninsured children!

If you have any questions or wish to cosponsor, please contact Ashley Fishburn in my office at 5-1252, or email Ashley.fishburn@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Adam H. Putnam
Member of Congress

¹Peterson, Chris L. & Grady, April. CRS Report for Congress: *Health Insurance: Uninsured Children, by State, 2005-2007*. Last updated August 29, 2008.
-Families USA. *Left Behind: Florida's Uninsured Children*. October 2008. www.familiesusa.org.