

March 28, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Crapo
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member,
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Safeguarding Children's Health: Reject Medicaid and CHIP Cuts

Dear Honorable Members of the United States House of Representatives and Senate:

Healthy children are the cornerstone of a great nation. The undersigned organizations write to **urge you to reject proposed cuts to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) because of the detrimental impact they will have on children's health and well-being.** Medicaid and CHIP represent far more than mere line items in a budget; they constitute vital investments in the development, long-term health, educational attainment, and future prosperity of children. Cuts to Medicaid and CHIP simply cannot be made without harming children's health coverage, access to care, and well-being.

Together, Medicaid and CHIP provide comprehensive health coverage to more than 37 million children. Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit guarantees that children under age 21 have access to a comprehensive set of benefits that ensures they receive appropriate preventive, dental, vision, mental health, developmental, and specialty services throughout their childhood so they can transition into healthy adulthood.

Medicaid/CHIP serve as a foundation for early childhood health and development. Of children under age 6, 42% nationally are enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. Medicaid/CHIP cover over 40%

of births nationally, providing essential prenatal care for a healthy start in life. By reducing child mortality, decreasing the utilization of emergency care and hospitalizations, and proactively promoting preventive care and the early treatment of illnesses, Medicaid and CHIP demonstrably improve health outcomes and promote a healthier future for our children.

Medicaid and CHIP are particularly critical for children living in rural, frontier, and underserved communities, where over 40% of children depend on these programs for their health care coverage. These vital programs furnish critical funding to sustain essential pediatric care, local hospitals, community health centers, and urgent care clinics, which are often the sole providers of health care in these underserved areas. Any curtailment of Medicaid and CHIP funding would force these already financially strained providers to close their doors or drastically reduce their services, leaving countless children without access to routine and emergency care.

Medicaid is a safety net for children in military-connected families. Over 3 million children of veterans are enrolled in Medicaid based on family income. Additionally, 220,000 children enrolled in Medicaid have TRICARE as their primary source of coverage. Medicaid functions as a secondary payer for children with TRICARE coverage, helping to fill gaps in benefits and protect military families with low incomes from substantial out-of-pocket expenses. This dual coverage arrangement is particularly beneficial for families with children who have serious medical conditions requiring specialized care.

Medicaid and CHIP also provide indispensable support for nearly half of the more than 13 million U.S. children who have special health care needs. Without the robust backing of these programs, these children would face substantial and often insurmountable barriers to accessing the specialized services and care they urgently require. Enacting cuts to Medicaid and CHIP would only exacerbate these existing challenges, forcing families to make impossible decisions between securing necessary health care and providing necessities such as food and housing. Such choices are unconscionable and should not be forced upon any family.

Medicaid serves as essential health care coverage for children involved with the child welfare system. The child welfare system includes children who are in or at-risk of entering foster care, those living with relative caregivers, and those adopted out of care.

- An estimated 99% of children in foster care have Medicaid coverage. Foster youth often require comprehensive medical, mental health, and developmental services. Children in foster care are much more likely to have experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, neglect, and/or household dysfunction, than the general population. This increases their risk of negative health outcomes, including developmental delays, behavioral and emotional problems, and other health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and obesity.
- Approximately one-third of children in foster care are placed with a relative or adult with whom the child has a meaningful relationship. This arrangement, known as kinship care, is promoted for its positive impact on child health, development, well-being, and its ability to keep kids connected to critical relationships with family. Kinship caregivers, however, are often older and have limited financial resources making it difficult to

provide health care coverage. Medicaid helps eliminate coverage barriers so children can get the care they need.

- Over one in four children who exit foster care join an adoptive family. Children adopted from foster care whose families are eligible for Title IV-E adoption assistance are categorically eligible for Medicaid.
- Child welfare agencies also receive vital support from Medicaid funding for directly providing health services, including rehabilitative services, targeted case, management, and treatment foster care.

Moreover, Medicaid and CHIP play a pivotal role for the mental health of children. From the earliest years, Medicaid and CHIP provide screening, diagnosis, and treatment for behavioral health needs, including services like social-emotional development, play therapy, and support for caregivers promoting health attachment. Some infant and early childhood mental health services are delivered through home visiting programs that can be financed by Medicaid, which provide support and education to new parents, helping them to build strong relationships with their children and promote healthy development. Medicaid and CHIP continue to provide critical mental health support beyond a child's earliest years. These supports are vital in the midst of the current crisis in children's mental health, where the numbers of students who persistently feel sad or hopeless and have seriously considered attempting suicide are increasing, and 50 percent of mental health disorders show their first signs before a child turns 14 years old.

Medicaid/CHIP have helped tackle this mental health crisis by providing access to mental health services for students through schools as well as age-appropriate preventive interventions in states.

Medicaid and CHIP also bolster critical support services within schools, enabling children, especially those with disabilities, to access essential therapies and the individualized support they require to thrive. Given that over one-third of all school-age children (5-18 years old) rely on Medicaid and CHIP for health care coverage, any reduction in program funding would inevitably force schools to implement drastic cuts to these crucial services. This, in turn, would severely limit educational opportunities and hinder the ability of children to participate fully in their education and reach their full potential. School nurses and counselors depend on Medicaid and CHIP funding to deliver indispensable mental health services, ensuring that children struggling with anxiety, depression, and the lingering effects of trauma receive the compassionate care and professional support they need.

The far-reaching benefits of investing in Medicaid and CHIP extend well beyond immediate health care needs. Research has consistently demonstrated that children who are covered by these programs experience better health outcomes in adulthood, achieve higher levels of school attendance, and demonstrate greater academic success. Moreover, enrollment in Medicaid and CHIP during childhood is associated with lower high school dropout rates, increased enrollment in higher education, and enhanced future earning potential. By providing this health care coverage, Medicaid and CHIP not only improve children's immediate health status but also make a profound contribution to their long-term well-being and productivity.

The health and wellness of caregivers, both mental and physical, also plays a crucial role in ensuring the optimal development and well-being of infants and children. Medicaid covers 23% of nonelderly adults with mental illness, many of whom are parents, highlighting the importance of mental health support for caregivers. Additionally, Medicaid/CHIP provide maternal health care coverage. For instance, 48 states and D.C. now provide 12 months of postpartum coverage in Medicaid/CHIP, which supports new mothers during a critical period for their and their children's mental and physical health. However, infant and maternal health and well-being programs currently receive well under 1% of the share of federal funding. This number is already inadequate to address the challenges that these populations face, and any further cuts would result in increased rates of infant and maternal mortality.

By maintaining and enhancing Medicaid/CHIP, we can help ensure that every child can grow up strong, healthy, and prepared for the future. Rather than cut these programs, Congress should instead work to strengthen, protect, and make investments in Medicaid/CHIP to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or health care needs, have access to the care they deserve. We urge you to reject policies that will result in cuts to Medicaid and CHIP.

Should you have any questions about the letter or wish to discuss this issue further, please contact Abuko D. Estrada, Vice President for Medicaid and Child Health Policy, at First Focus Campaign for Children at abukoe@firstfocus.org.

Respectfully,

National Organizations:

First Focus Campaign for Children
AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Academic Pediatric Association
African American Health Alliance
AFT: Education, Healthcare, Public Services
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
Allergy & Asthma Network
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Community Dental Programs
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
American Association on Health and Disability
American Pediatric Society
American Pediatric Surgical Association
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Boston Children's Hospital
Camp Elasticity Productions

Care in Action
Caring Across Generations
Cartwheel Care
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)
Child-Friendly Faith Project
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's HealthWatch
Children's Hospital Association
Children's Rights
Circle of Parents, Inc.
Clinical Social Work Association
Coalition on Human Needs
Committee for Children
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congressional Research Institute for Social Work Policy
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Early Opportunities Initiative
EDGE Consulting Partners
Educare Learning Network
ELCA
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Families USA
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Focused Treatment Association
Futures Without Violence
Generations United
Give for a Smile
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, Inc
HealthConnect One
Healthy Teen Network
HEAR US Inc.
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
iFoster
Institute for Policy Studies' Poverty Project
Juvenile Law Center
Lakeshore Foundation
Leading for Kids
Legal Action Center
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
March of Dimes
MaryCatherine Jones Consulting, LLC
Medicaid Medicare CHIP Services Dental Association

MENTOR

MomsRising

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Alliance for Caregiving

National Association of Counsel for Children

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of School Nurses

National Association of Social Workers

National Center for Youth Law

National Center on Adoption and Permanency

National Coalition for the Homeless

National Council of Jewish Women

National Diaper Bank Network

National Domestic Workers Alliance

National Education Association

National Federation of Families

National Health Law Program

National Healthy Start Association (NHSA)

National Immigrant Justice Center

National League for Nursing

National Network for Youth

National Organization for Women

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

National Respite Coalition

North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

ParentChild+

Parents as Teachers National Center

ParentsTogether Action

Pediatric Policy Council

Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health

Prevention Institute

Primary Care Development Corporation

Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator

Public Citizen

Rights4Girls

School-Based Health Alliance

Sisters of Charity, BVM

Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine

Society for Pediatric Research

SocioEnergetics Foundation

Spina Bifida Association

Start Early

Strategies for Youth Inc.

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health/Got Transition

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

Together for Girls

Treatment Communities of America
UnidosUS
Voice for Adoption
Voices of Health Care Action
Well Spouse Association
Woodward Academy
Writrol Corporation
Youth Law Center
ZERO TO THREE

State/Local/Tribal Organizations:

Alabama:

Alabama Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Thrive Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

Alaska:

Alaska Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Arizona:

Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Child & Family Resources, Inc
Children's Action Alliance
International Rescue Committee, Arizona

Arkansas:

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

California:

Alliance for Children's Rights
California Alliance of Caregivers
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics
California Children's Hospital Association
Children Now
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Children's Hospital Los Angeles Medical Group
Children's Speciality Care Coalition
End Child Poverty California
First 5 California
James' Solar
Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)

Placer Independent Resource Services
Regional Asthma Management & Prevention (RAMP)
Sycasmores
The California Family Resource Association
The Child Abuse Prevention Center
The Children's Partnership

Colorado

Bodywork by KAS
Children's Hospital Colorado
Clayton Early Learning
Colorado Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Colorado Children's Campaign
Invest in Kids
The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County

Connecticut:

Advancing CT Together
Connecticut Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Connecticut Voices for Children
Stafford Community and Senior Center
The Diaper Bank of Connecticut
Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut
Westville Community Nursery School, Inc.

Delaware:

Delaware Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

District of Columbia:

DC Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Rebuilding Independence My Style

Florida:

Florida Association of Children's Hospitals
Florida Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Florida Policy Institute
Floridians For Dental Access
The Family Cafe, Inc.

Georgia:

Georgia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Hawaii:

Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!

Idaho:

Idaho Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois:

Access Living

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Chicago Women's AIDS Project

Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

ICIRR

Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois Collaboration on Youth

Indiana:

Covering Kids & Families of Indiana

Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Iowa:

American Home Finding Association

Coalition for Family & Children's Services in Iowa

Common Good Iowa

Crittenton Center

Ellipsis

Family Access Center

Family Resources

Iowa Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Orchard Place

Tanager

Youth Shelter Care of NCI

Kansas:

Kansas Action for Children

Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Kentucky:

Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Kentucky Voices for Health

Louisiana:

LDP Disability Caucus

Louisiana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Maine:

Maine Center for Economic Policy

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Opportunity Enterprises, Incorporated

Maryland:

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore

In Reach, Inc.

Karabelle Pizzigati Initiative in Advocacy for Children, Youth, and Families at the University of Maryland

Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Public Justice Center

Massachusetts:

Health Law Advocates

RESULTS - Massachusetts

Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Michigan:

Michigan Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health

Michigan League for Public Policy

Spratt LLC

The Arc Michigan

TrueNorth Community Services

Minnesota:

AspireMN

Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota

Minnesota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition

Mississippi:

Mississippi Center for Justice

Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Missouri:

A Red Circle

Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Youth In Need

Montana:

Montana Budget & Policy Center

Montana Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Nebraska:

Nebraska Appleseed

Nebraska Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada:

Nevada Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

New Hampshire:

ADCES NH Coordinating Body

New Hampshire Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

New Jersey:

Advocates for Children of New Jersey

embrella, Embracing Families

Family Voices NJ

Lunch Break

New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

New Mexico:

Health Action New Mexico

High Plains Regional Education Cooperative

New Mexico Pediatric Society

Strong Families

New York:

Children's Aid

Children's Home of Jefferson County

Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

COFCCA

Homespace Corp.

Housing Works, Inc.

Medicaid Matters New York

Metro New York Health Care for All

Mountain Lake Academy

NDN Genius

New York Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics

New York Chapter 2, American Academy of Pediatrics

New York Chapter 3, American Academy of Pediatrics

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Silver Health Strategies

The Children's Agenda

The New York Foundling

THELMA COSTELLO LMHC PC

United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

North Carolina:

Goldsboro Pediatrics, PA

NC Child

NC Pediatric Society

Positive Childhood Alliance North Carolina (previously, Prevent Child Abuse NC)

Ohio:

Human Service Chamber of Franklin County
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Somali Community Association of Ohio

Oklahoma:

Oklahoma Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon:

Children's Institute
Oregon Pediatric Society
Oregon School-Based Health Alliance
Our Children Oregon
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Pennsylvania:

AIDS Resource
Allies for Children
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
City Dermatology
Czar Consulting
HIAS Pennsylvania
Kuharmedical
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
Steel Valley Family Center
United Way of Pennsylvania
Women's Law Project

Rhode Island:

Adoption Rhode Island
Rhode Island Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Child and Family of Rhode Island
Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families
Washington County Coalition for Children

South Carolina:

Children's Trust of South Carolina
Family Connection of South Carolina
South Carolina Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

South Dakota:

South Dakota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Tennessee:

Family Voices of TN

RESULTS Tennessee

Tennessee Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Texas:

Casa de Esperanza

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

RESULTS - Austin

Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services

Texas Pediatric Society

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Hidalgo County Texas

Utah:

Children's Service Society of Utah

RESULTS - Utah

Utah Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Voices for Utah Children

Vermont:

Vermont Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

TVT

Voices for Vermont's Children

Virginia:

Cornerstones, Inc.

Health Brigade

Hemophilia Association of the Capital Area

Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Virginia Hemophilia Foundation

Washington:

Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition

Grey Panthers of WA State

Latinos Promoting Good Health

Partners for Our Children

SWYFS/New Futures program

WA Latinx Health Board

Washington Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Washington Healthcare Access Alliance

Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP

West Virginia:

TEAM for West Virginia Children
West Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Wisconsin:

Children's Wisconsin
Wisconsin Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Wyoming:

Cheyenne Children's Clinic
Wyoming Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wyoming Community Foundation