



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Thursday, May 26, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Advocates protect children's health in Washington State

Legislature preserves Cover All Kids law, recognizes kids' health needs

Contact: [Adam Hyla](#), Communications Director, 206-324-0340 ext. 18; 206-326-9964 (cell)
[Jon Gould](#), Deputy Director, 206-324-0340 ext. 19; 206-683-2674 (cell)

Thursday, May 26, 2011 – At the end of a difficult legislative session, child advocates have walked away with a major accomplishment. The successful Apple Health for Kids health coverage program will stay open to all eligible children.

During an incredibly challenging year, the advocacy of more than [50 organizations](#) and thousands of parents and child advocates over the past six months resulted in the protection of a vital children's health coverage program. Legislators maintained Apple Health for Kids, blocking attempts to limit enrollment or deny health coverage to children.

"It took a monumental effort to protect the health of our state's children," says Jon Gould, Children's Alliance's deputy director.

Last December, advocates and lawmakers faced the colossal challenge of Gov. Gregoire's budget proposal, which would have ended health coverage for 27,000 undocumented children. In April, the State Senate proposed to undo the state's commitment to cover all eligible kids.

"These proposed cuts were a major step backwards for our state and unfairly targeted children in immigrant families," says Gould. "In the midst of some really dire choices, the House and Senate agreed on one thing: Kids' health is too precious to sacrifice to a budget shortfall. No child should go without the health care they need."

Apple Health for Kids will receive a small funding cut that raises premiums for undocumented children living in families at 200-300 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$37,000 - \$54,000 a year for a family of three). About 250 kids' monthly premiums will rise from \$20-\$30 per month to approximately \$80-90 per month this fall. The Children's Alliance is working to identify sponsors to help families who would experience financial hardship as a result of the higher premiums.

Among the Senate's proposals was an enrollment cap, higher premiums for more than 100,000 children, and loss of coverage for some undocumented kids. None of these harmful changes made it into the final budget.

"This year, legislators from all parts of Washington kept their promise to children and upheld their commitment to cover all kids," says Gould. "They recognized the value of all children and preserved the smart policies that have been put in place to ensure preventive health care for kids."

###

The Children's Alliance is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the state and federal level to ensure that all children have what they need to thrive. Learn more at www.childrensalliance.org.