



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

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Doctor's orders: Protect Apple Health for Kids *\$80M will brighten state budget outlook*

Monday, March 21, 2011 – Kids, advocates and medical professionals this morning announced \$80 million in federal revenue the state is expected to receive in recognition of Apple Health for Kids.

This federal money provides a sensible way to provide health coverage for all eligible children and avoid any unnecessary reductions.

“We have what it takes to continue Apple Health for Kids,” said Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children’s Alliance.

The state earns this money each year from the federal government for making strides in enrolling eligible children. Over the past two years, Apple Health for Kids’ successful enrollment practices have earned \$25 million in federal bonus funding. Over the next two years, the program stands to earn \$80 million, according to [a new analysis](#) by Children’s Alliance staff. If enrollment is higher than predicted, the state could earn as much as \$94 million.

“This is a bright spot for the state,” said Gould, given the news last week that the poor economy has widened the next two-year budget gap. “We are being rewarded for doing the right thing: the more kids who can see a doctor, the better our budget situation.”

With one streamlined enrollment process and the same benefits package for all eligible children, Apple Health for Kids is an affordable means of making sure our kids are healthy—exactly what lawmakers intended when they passed the Cover All Kids law in 2007.

Since then, enrollment in the program has steadily grown, and the number of kids without health coverage has dropped. Nearly 700,000 kids are enrolled in the program, or about 39 percent of all Washington kids. Apple Health for Kids covers 1 out of every 3 King County children.

State lawmakers are considering eliminating Apple Health for Kids for approximately 27,000 children. This would be a big step backwards, says Gould, hurting a program that’s earning the state money in recognition of its effectiveness and efficiency.

Covering Kids Statewide

% of children by county who can see a doctor thanks to Apple Health:

Adams	87.3
Chelan:	65.6
Clark:	42.0
Franklin:	67.9
King:	34.7
Kitsap:	32.9
Pierce:	41.4
Spokane:	50.0
Walla Walla:	52.3
Yakima:	76.4
State total:	38.9

Thousands of families who have lost health coverage due to the recession have turned to Apple Health to make sure their kids can see a doctor, dentist or medical professional.

“Healthy kids succeed in school,” said Chris Korsmo, executive director of the League of Education Voters. “Apple Health for Kids is helping hundreds of thousands of Washington children focus on learning.”

Whether or not their parents have employer-based coverage, kids still need regular check-ups and screenings – elementary measures that save lives and dollars later on.

“Dental problems often start small but quickly become more difficult and costly to treat. That is why preventing dental disease is cost-effective,” said Laura Smith, President and CEO of the Washington Dental Service Foundation. “Apple Health for Kids helps ensure that kids receive preventive dental care. Even during difficult economic times, we need to support low-cost programs that improve children’s oral health.”

“No child should go without health care,” said Gould. “We call upon the legislature to preserve Apple Health for Kids. The new federal funds are more than enough to avoid making the proposed budget cut. There is no excuse for failing to ensure that a child gets the care they need to grow up healthy and strong.”

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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.

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