

Health Coalition for Children and Youth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. Supreme Court Decision on the Affordable Care Act clears way for a healthier, more equitable Washington for our kids

(June 28, 2012) – The U.S. Supreme Court's decision today preserving the Affordable Care Act clears the way for us to move forward with implementation of this historic law. Our state must take this opportunity and make the best possible choices for children and families to ensure that more Washingtonians have access to quality, affordable healthcare and coverage.

We in Washington have already done much to ensure that children have the health coverage they need. Apple Health for Kids, Washington's health coverage program for children, helps children stay healthy and able to learn. Parents across Washington have turned to Apple Health for Kids to secure regular check-ups, vaccinations, and other care so that common childhood illnesses don't develop into chronic and costly health conditions.

We need to continue our progress for children and families. We can do this by ensuring that new health systems work for kids and families, address the causes of health disparities, and promote health equity. We must make sure families have access to necessary benefits, and make sure that they have access to

American Diabetes Association
American Lung Association, WA Chapter
Benton Franklin Community Health Alliance
Cedar River Group
Children's Alliance
Children's Home Society of Washington
CHOICE Regional Health Network
Communities Connect
Community Health Plan
Community Health Network of Washington
Community Minded Enterprises
Group Health Cooperative
Faith Action Network (formerly LPPO & AC)
King County Project Access
Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
Molina Healthcare of Washington
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, WA Chapter
National Association of Social Workers, Washington State Chapter
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Northwest International Health Action Coalition
Planned Parenthood Public Policy Network of Washington
Professional & Technical Employees, Local 17
School Nurse Organization of Washington
Sea Mar Community Health Centers
SEIU Healthcare 1199NW
SEIU WA State Council
Solid Ground
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Swedish Medical Center
Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers
Washington Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington Community Action Network
Washington Dental Service Foundation
Washington Health Foundation
Washington State Hospital Association
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Washington State Nurses Association
Washington State Oral Health Coalition
Washington State PTA
WithinReach
Yakima County Health Care Coalition

healthcare providers who speak their language. Insurance plans must be easy to understand, affordable, and include benefits that families need.

By making smart decisions, our policymakers can ensure that health care is more accessible for children and families.

The stakes for Washington families are high. About 6 percent of kids in Washington – over 101,000 in all – still don't have health insurance; this percentage is three times greater in some communities of color. Over 1 million adults are also uninsured. We must continue our efforts to ensure that the parents and caregivers of our state's children have realistic options for their health coverage – coverage that is affordable and high quality, with appropriate benefits.

The Supreme Court's decision affirms our state's efforts to move forward with the expansion of Medicaid for those earning up to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Washington should capitalize on this opportunity, making health coverage available to an additional 89,000 parents in our state who are among the 328,000 people who will be helped by this expansion.

Our policymakers have the opportunity to tailor our new healthcare system to provide more affordable health coverage options for even more kids and adults. We need to ensure that required health benefits meet the needs of kids and families. We should continue considering adoption of the federal Basic Health Option. We must also make the system consumer-friendly through simple administrative processes and a Navigator program that helps families identify health coverage options.

Our state made a commitment to health coverage for all children. But we cannot uphold our commitment to ensuring care and coverage for all children if we do not ensure that the adults providing and caring for children also have the chance for quality health coverage and care.

While we will need some more time to understand the full implications of the Court's ruling, we in Washington can continue forward on our path of covering more children and families and getting them the consistent and comprehensive healthcare they need to thrive. It's a happy day for Washingtonians, clearing the way for a healthier future.

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The Health Coalition for Children and Youth is statewide coalition of organizations in Washington State that work to meet the health needs of kids, including medical, dental and mental healthcare. To learn about the Health Coalition for Children and Youth, please contact Lan Nguyen, Health Policy Director at the Children's Alliance at 206.324.0340, x15.