



Covering all kids made sense in good times; it makes even more sense in hard times.

Apple Health for Kids—Washington's children's health insurance program—is a proven success and is a lifeline to struggling families during this Great Recession. Through Apple Health for Kids, eligible families receive affordable and quality coverage for dental, medical and behavioral health care. The *Cover All Kids* law that created Apple Health for Kids was a bold stroke to change the way we protect children and assist working families, and this change is paying off for families, businesses, and public structures.



Apple Health is a successful and popular program that generates millions of dollars each year in flexible federal funding. The federal government has recognized the achievements of Apple Health for Kids by awarding the state \$17.6 million new federal dollars in December 2010. This bonus provides a sensible opportunity to maintain current coverage levels for Apple Health in this economic crisis. Bonuses, authorized through 2013, are based on caseload. Maintaining and improving Apple Health will increase our caseload and compound our existing gains in the form of more *unrestricted federal dollars*.

Maintain our State's progress on children's health and reach our goal of covering all kids. The federal bonus allows the State to preserve the federally-mandated telephone hotline for Apple Health for Kids by allocating \$33,000 this year from the bonus. Currently, the non-profit *WithinReach* adeptly manages the hotline with dwindling private funds. If funds are not allocated, DSHS, which acknowledges that *WithinReach* runs the program far more efficiently, will be forced to add this task to their already overburdened call centers.

Apple Health for Kids saves our state millions of dollars each year. Apple Health for Kids covers the preventative services that save money now and in the future. One hospital stay for a preventable asthma attack costs an average of \$3,000 whereas we can cover a child for less than \$5 a day. Since 2006, uncompensated care in Washington State has nearly doubled to about \$1 billion. This raises the cost of healthcare for everyone. Access to comprehensive medical and dental care for children reduces uncompensated care costs.

Lawmakers should maintain Apple Health for all currently eligible children. Continued support of Apple Health for Kids is essential in protecting this successful and necessary program. During good times, and difficult times, standing strong to our state's commitment to health coverage for all kids is a legacy we can be proud of.

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