



Community Advocates for Oral Health



For Immediate Release

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## Widespread praise for passage of children's health bill

*Support comes from business, labor and education leaders*

**March 6, 2007** (Seattle) – Children and healthcare advocates were joined by a broad coalition of allies in praising House passage of the children's health bill (SB 5093/HB 1071). **With House approval, this historic legislation now goes to Governor Chris Gregoire for her signature.** This thoughtful legislation includes additional health coverage options for families, initiatives to expand access to doctors, quality incentives and the establishment of "medical homes". For a summary of the bill, go to [http://childrensalliance.org/4Download/health/cover\\_all\\_children\\_summary.pdf](http://childrensalliance.org/4Download/health/cover_all_children_summary.pdf).

**Statements of support:**

"This historic legislation will positively affect not only the health of Washington children, but also their ability to grow and succeed throughout their lives. We applaud the lawmakers who worked so hard to ensure passage of this bill. The benefits of their actions in passing this legislation will impact health, education and our economy for years to come."

**Paola Maranan**, Executive Director, Children's Alliance

"I support this bill because it seeks to provide for the needs of children in prevention of disease by early diagnosis and treatment. It brings immunizations to children prior to the age of maximum exposure. It could lead to the development of a statewide valid data base system to document endemic and epidemic data."

**John A. Moyer MD, FACOG**

Former Republican State Senator, Spokane

"If we are to reach the ambitious goals set forth by the Early Learning Council, we must ensure that every child has access to high quality health care. The Governor and the Legislature are to be congratulated for developing and passing this bill. Getting every child off to a great start in life and learning benefits every single Washingtonian!"

**Bob Watt**, Co-Chair, Early Learning Council

“The state set an admirable goal of covering all children. With concrete steps in the last two years and today's legislation, they are now finishing the job. There is no greater good than taking care of our future, and that means our children. William James once said that the greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it. Health care for every child will outlast us.”

**Howard Behar**, Starbucks Coffee Company Board of Directors

“The only thing more important than our children’s education is their health. The League of Education Voters praises legislators for passing SB 5093 into law. This is groundbreaking legislation that ensures all Washington children will have access to affordable health care. Parents will no longer have to worry whether they can afford a trip to the doctor when their child is sick. Teachers won’t have to worry whether students can see the blackboard, hear their lessons or concentrate on their school work. The League of Education Voters believes providing children access to health care is the fundamental first step to a good education.”

**Nick Hanauer**, Board President, League of Education Voters

“By making health coverage available to all children, this bill will literally save lives. The governor and legislators deserve great praise for making this vision a reality. Timely, quality health care is both cost-effective and the right thing to do for children.”

**Thomas Hansen, MD**

Chief Executive Officer, Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center

“This legislation takes an important step to prevent dental disease, the most common chronic disease of early childhood. We are delighted that dental disease prevention is included as a priority in this bill. Good oral health is important for a child to succeed in school and in life.”

**Tracy Garland**, President & CEO, Washington Dental Service Foundation

“The Washington State Labor Council congratulates and expresses our appreciation to the Legislature for taking this important step to provide quality and affordable health care coverage to the children of Washington state. It is the right thing to do. As we pursue the children's program, we hope the Legislature will take similar bold steps to address the daunting challenge of providing quality affordable health care coverage to all residents of our state.”

**Rick Bender**, President, Washington State Labor Council

“As a provider of quality early education for children from families earning low incomes, we are acutely aware of the role that health care access plays in a child's ability to learn. Passage of the children's health bill gives this opportunity to tens of thousands of Washington's currently uninsured children and helps teachers concentrate on educating our next generation. The elected officials that are played a role in making this legislation a reality deserve heartfelt thanks.”

**Ellen von Wandruszka**

Executive Director, Pike Market Child Care & Preschool, Seattle

“The Latino community is pleased to see that the Governor and state legislators are working to improve children’s access to health care. The passage of the children’s health bill is a huge step forward toward ensuring coverage for all children, including immigrant children.”

**Rogelio Riojas**, CEO, Sea Mar Community Health Center

“Lawmakers are to be congratulated for this bill, which will have a great impact on the health of children in Washington State. The bill not only makes health coverage available to more children, it also focuses on access to care and quality. Pediatricians know that the best care is regular care in a “medical home” – the kind of place where services are coordinated, families are known by name and a child’s development is tracked over time. This thoughtful legislation will make that kind of care available to tens of thousands of additional Washington children.”

**Chris Olson, MD**

President, Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

“It’s hard for most of us to imagine the relief that many parents will feel when they hear that lawmakers passed this historic bill to cover all of Washington's children. However, the doctors and nurses across our community health center system know firsthand the benefits of insuring these children. As the medical home to over *half* of the State’s uninsured children we see improved health outcomes and healthier communities when kids are insured. Kudos to our elected leaders who worked for passage of this landmark legislation.”

**Rebecca Kavoussi**

Director of Public Policy, Community Health Network of Washington

“Passage of this bill ensures that children get the right care, at the right time, in the right place. Children’s health will improve when they have consistent, quality care in a doctor’s office, saving emergency room visits and hospitalizations for conditions that can’t be prevented. Thanks are due to all of the lawmakers who supported this historic bill.”

**Leo Greenawalt**, President, Washington State Hospital Association

“By enabling early, preventive care, coverage of low-income kids is a wise investment. This legislation emphasizes performance measurement, and links the amount providers are reimbursed to quality measures – tax dollars leveraged with private sector support. It’s not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do.”

**Scott Armstrong**, President & CEO, Group Health

“We know that getting children covered significantly reduces the health disparities of children of color. Through outreach and targeted expansion in public insurance, this legislation will get much needed coverage to more children. The bill also ensures equal access to health coverage for immigrant children where health disparities are prevalent, particularly amongst Latino children. Our lawmakers are to be congratulated for doing the right thing - for passing legislation that ensures health coverage options for all of our children.”

**Dorry Elias-Garcia**

Executive Director, Minority Executive Directors Coalition

“This bill is a tremendous achievement for the quality of life for our next generation. More children will have a healthy start with access to the quality medical and dental care they need to stay well. Prevention is the cornerstone of community health, and children in all of our communities will see healthier futures as a result of this landmark legislation.”

**David Fleming, MD**

Director and Health Officer, Public Health - Seattle & King County

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