



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Speaking Out for Washington's Children Since 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FOUNDATIONS INFUSE MAJOR INVESTMENT TO STRENGTHEN
HEALTH CARE REFORM ADVOCACY IN WASHINGTON**

*Washington Community Action Network and Children's Alliance announce
support to bolster reforms to cover uninsured children and families*

Seattle, Washington – Washington Community Action Network (Washington CAN!) and Children's Alliance announced today that they have been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard) respectively to participate in grant projects which will considerably strengthen health reform efforts in Washington.

Washington CAN! will participate in the *Consumer Voices for Coverage* initiative, a joint project of RWJF and Community Catalyst, which concentrates broadly on state health care reform initiatives. Children's Alliance will be part of Packard's *Finish Line Project*, which focuses on providing coverage for all children. Nationwide, the two programs are providing 18 advocacy organizations in 14 states with significant technical and financial resources.

Each organization has been awarded a three-year grant of \$250,000 each year; a total investment of \$1.5 million in health care reform advocacy. Washington is one of only four states nationally to participate in both grant programs, signaling confidence from national funders that Washington is positioned to be a pioneer state in guaranteeing quality, affordable health care for all residents.

“Being chosen to receive this grant signifies that health care experts nationwide are looking to Washington to be a laboratory for the nation on how to guarantee that all people have quality, affordable health coverage,” said **Deana Knutsen, Washington CAN! board chair**. “The voices of hard-working families – real people who face real struggles because they do not have health insurance – need to be heard. We hope to add volume to their voices through this grant.”

“Washington state took a historic step forward when we passed the Cover All Kids bill last year. Now, it’s up to all of us to ensure the promise of that bill is fulfilled,” said **Paola Maranan, executive director of the Children’s Alliance**. “We need to make sure that every child has health coverage and a medical home where he or she can get the regular, preventive care so important for kids. This grant from the Packard Foundation will help us ensure that children in Washington are healthier and more successful in school because they have the health care they need.”

“It is time for action, not words, and that’s what this announcement is all about,” said **U.S. Congressman Jim McDermott**. “These two organizations represent the best of what Washington state has to offer in leadership to drive health care reform first in Washington and then as a national model. They will build the coalitions within our civil society that will demand reform.”

“Over the next 18 months, Washington state has an incredible opportunity to make headway in guaranteeing quality health care coverage is affordable for all people in Washington,” said **State Senator Karen Keiser, chair of the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee**. “The investment of resources to raise consumer voices in the debate will bolster the momentum for reform.”

Sarah Casad, a mother of two young girls in Whatcom County, was able to insure her children through the state's Cover All Kids program, but she and her husband remain without insurance: "I'm grateful that Washington state now has a program that my children qualify for, although my concerns are now turned toward my husband and me and all the other Washingtonians who can't get health care—especially those of us who are self-employed or who work for small businesses."

Finish Line Project

Funded by the Packard Foundation, the *Finish Line Project* is a \$15 million, multi-year grant program providing financial and technical support to advocacy organizations in eight states that are best positioned to make significant advances in children’s coverage. The project is supported by The Center for Children and Families, an independent, non-partisan policy institute based at Georgetown University’s Health Policy Institute, which will provide policy and communication counsel to each of the *Finish Line* state grantees.

Other state organizations receiving *Finish Line Project* grants include:

- Arkansas -- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Colorado -- Colorado Children’s Campaign
- Iowa -- Child and Family Policy Center
- Ohio -- Voices for Ohio’s Children
- Rhode Island -- Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
- Texas -- Children's Defense Fund of Texas

In addition to funding in those seven states, Packard will also expand its multi-year, multi-million dollar investment in support of children’s coverage work in California.

Consumer Voices for Coverage

Initiated by RWJF, *Consumer Voices for Coverage* will enhance the critical role that advocates play in shaping and promoting comprehensive health reform. The \$15 million initiative will strengthen existing advocacy networks in 12 states. Community Catalyst, a national non-profit consumer health advocacy organization headquartered in Boston, will coordinate the effort nationwide.

Organizations chosen to lead *Consumer Voices for Coverage* networks in other select states include:

- California -- Health Access Foundation
- Colorado -- Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
- Illinois -- Campaign for Better Health Care
- Maine -- Consumers for Affordable Health Care Foundation
- Maryland -- Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative Education Fund, Inc.
- Minnesota -- TakeAction Minnesota Education Fund
- New Jersey -- New Jersey Citizen Action Education Fund
- New York -- The Community Service Society
- Ohio -- Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio, Inc.
- Oregon -- Oregon Health Action Campaign
- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia Unemployment Project/Unemployment Information Center

“For over 20 years, Washington CAN! has been a leader in efforts to reform health care in Washington. We are excited to work with such a strong organization to increase the momentum towards action in this state,” said **Susan T. Sherry, deputy director of Community Catalyst**, who directs *Consumer Voices for Coverage*. “Supporting networks that bring the views of real people to policymakers and key thought leaders in the states about the need for coverage expansion can be a powerful inducement for reform.”

“Washington is moving forward in addressing the pressing health care needs of children,” said **Cindy Mann, executive director of the Center for Children and Families**. “Children’s Alliance will be working with advocates across the country to learn from each other about what works and which policy reforms are most efficient and effective at getting more kids covered. As they do so, they will ensure that state leaders and advocates adopt best practices to improve coverage for children and families in this state.”

For more information about the *Finish Line Project*, visit <http://www.packard.org/finishlineproject>

Additional information on *Consumer Voices for Coverage* can be found at www.voicesforcoverage.org

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About Washington Community Action Network

With over 35,000 members across the state, Washington CAN! is the state's largest grassroots community organization. Washington CAN! fights for progressive social change at the local, state, and national levels, with a focus on issues that most directly affect the lives of Washington residents. Our mission is to achieve economic fairness in order to establish a democratic society characterized by racial and social justice, with respect for diversity, and a decent quality of life for those who reside in Washington State. www.washingtoncan.org

About the Children’s Alliance

At the Children’s Alliance we’re advocates for kids. We protect kids by changing laws. We serve kids by making sure programs and policies work. We put kids first by securing resources. We advocate for kids by holding lawmakers accountable. www.childrensalliance.org

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve

comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years, the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. By helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

About the David and Lucile Packard Foundation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation is a private family foundation created in 1964 by David Packard (1912–1996), cofounder of the Hewlett-Packard Company, and Lucile Salter Packard (1914–1987). The Foundation provides grants to nonprofit organizations in the following program areas: Conservation and Science; Population; and Children, Families, and Communities. The Foundation makes national and international grants and also has a special focus on the Northern California Counties of San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. Foundation grantmaking includes support for a wide variety of activities including direct services, research and policy development, and public information and education. The Foundation does not make grants intended to influence legislation or support candidates for political office. The Foundation's endowment was approximately \$6.6 billion as of December 31, 2007. General program grant awards totaled approximately \$274 million in 2007. The Foundation has a grantmaking budget of approximately \$300 million in 2008.