



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Speaking Out for Washington's Children Since 1983

For Immediate Release

CONTACTS:

Jon Gould, deputy director, (206) 324-0340 x19, cell: (206) 683-2674, jon@childrensalliance.org

Ruth Schubert, communications manager, (206) 324-0340 x18, cell: (206) 498-0185, ruth@childrensalliance.org

State extends Apple Health for Kids to struggling moderate-income families

State starts accepting applications last week of November

November 19, 2008 (Seattle)—As more and more Washington families feel the economic pinch and struggle to pay their bills, legislation passed almost two years ago is extending a lifeline of health security. Beginning January 1, 2009, Washington's Apple Health for Kids phases in for children in families up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, around \$52,800 a year for a family of three. The state will begin accepting applications for health coverage for these families beginning the last week of November (for coverage that will start January 1, 2009).

For information on enrolling in Apple Health for Kids, families can go to <http://applehealthforkids.wa.gov> or call 877-543-7669 (877-KIDS-NOW).

One of the first children in line for this program will be **seven-year-old Sarah McIntyre of Yakima**. Sarah was born with a hole in her heart and cysts on one lung. Her heart and lungs have been repaired, but she still has difficulty breathing. Regular medical care is the key to a happy and active life for Sarah. But since 2006, when her family's income rose slightly, Sarah has gone without health coverage. Neither parent can get affordable or adequately comprehensive coverage for their daughter through their jobs, and insurance on the private market is out of reach.

With the exception of a few months of emergency medical assistance from the state, Sarah's family has been making do, managing to get medications for Sarah's bronchial asthma that cost the family nearly \$800 a month.

"I don't know what we'll do if there is an emergency, or how we'll be able afford Sarah's prescriptions," worries Vicky McIntyre, Sarah's mom. "I've been at my job for 12 years and my husband at his for 10 years. I'm not asking the state to support my family. I just want help to get the proper medical care for my daughter."

Vicky and Sarah's father, Dewayne, are like many moderate-income families, increasingly squeezed as the economy worsens. Fortunately, our state's elected officials had the foresight to put

in place an affordable healthcare coverage program that provides families a lifeline to weather times like these.

Created by the 2007 Cover All Kids law, which set the goal of making sure there are no uninsured children in Washington by 2010, Apple Health for Kids offers families above 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level the opportunity to purchase affordable coverage with monthly premiums.

The full implementation of Apple Health for Kids to children in moderate-income families is a fiscally wise step. More than half the cost will be covered by the federal government. Families will pay 20 percent of the cost and the state the remaining 28 percent.

The Cover All Kids law has already been tremendously effective, as explained in "[Every Child by 2010](#)," a new report from the Children's Alliance. In 2006, 73,000 Washington children were uninsured. In the first year of Cover All Kids, 40,000 of those children were enrolled in health coverage. Washington boasts one of the lowest children's uninsurance rates in the country.

"Thousands of families across Washington who are struggling to meet the rising costs of food and housing now have peace of mind, knowing they have the medical coverage needed to help keep their children healthy and care for them if they get sick," said Paola Maranan, executive director of the Children's Alliance. "This is a program that is delivering at the moment when families need it most."

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