

Finishing the Job: House Bill 1071/Senate Bill 5093 Health Coverage for all Children by 2010

The Health Coalition for Children and Youth visualizes Washington as a state where every child is healthy because they have health (including dental and mental health) coverage and access to timely care in a medical home. Both *coverage* and *access to a medical home* are important, because together they facilitate receipt of timely services that all children should have. As a coalition, we developed a comprehensive proposal to provide access to quality health care for all children by 2010 that includes the following concepts:

Access: invest in outreach activities to inform families about the availability and value of health insurance for their children, simplify and streamline the enrollment processes, and link children to a medical home

The state estimates that close to two-thirds of Washington's uninsured children are now eligible for coverage through currently available programs. Many parents of these children either do not know their child is eligible or are overwhelmed by the systems they must navigate to get their child covered. Funding should be allocated to identify and enroll eligible children, streamline and simplify the application, enrollment, and renewal processes for state health care programs, and link children with a medical home. Children who receive care in a medical home are more likely to access all necessary and appropriate care including well child visits, immunizations, and timely referrals for needed pediatric specialty care that keep children healthy, prevent future illnesses and provide care management for serious illnesses and chronic conditions.

Coverage: expand coverage options for children for whom there is no coverage currently available

Some uninsured children are not eligible for coverage on any currently available program. Efforts to cover all children should invest in solutions to make sure that health coverage is available for all children. The eligibility level for children's health care should be expanded to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level; families with incomes above 200% of the poverty level will pay a portion of their children's premiums. Another effective way to advance children's health is to make sure parents have coverage; Basic Health is a great vehicle for this.

Quality: promote initiatives that will increase access to preventive health care services and improve the quality of care children receive in a medical home

The state's efforts should not stop at simply covering all children – having insurance coverage does not mean that children will receive access to cost-effective, quality preventive health care that improves children's health outcomes. The state must also work to increase access and improve the quality of care that children receive with their health coverage by providing financial incentives for evidence-based quality outcomes, aligning incentives directly with the desired outcomes and expanding quality improvement training programs.

House Bill 1071/Senate Bill 5093 are critical to achieving the state's goal of covering all children by 2010. The following organizations urge legislators to pass this legislation:

American Lung Association of Washington ~ Children's Alliance ~ Children's Home Society of Washington ~ Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center ~ Community Health Network of Washington ~ Community Health Plan of Washington ~ Fair Share Coalition of Washington ~ Group Health Cooperative ~ King County Project Access ~ Inland Northwest Health Services ~ Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington State ~ March of Dimes, Washington State Chapter ~ Mary Bridge Children's Hospital ~ Molina Healthcare of Washington ~ National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners ~ National Association of Social Workers, Washington State Chapter ~ Northwest Health Law Advocates ~ Northwest International Health Action Coalition ~ Public Health-Seattle King County ~ Sacred Heart Children's Hospital ~ Swedish Medical Center ~ School Nurse Organization of Washington ~ Service Employees International Union 1199 NW ~ Solid Ground ~ Statewide Poverty Action Network ~ 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 Nurses Association ~ Washington State Hospital Association ~ Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO ~ Washington State Oral Health Coalition ~ WithinReach

For more information, please contact Liz Arjun at liz@childrensalliance.org or 206.324.0340 ext. 21