

NOT LETTING 'CHIP' FALL

House-Senate Plan Would Keep Iowa Kids Insured; Veto Looms

Check the label — there's not a lot of shelf life left for a joint federal-state program that assures health-care coverage for some 37,000 Iowa kids, many through the popular "*hawk-i*" program. Congress has proposed an expansion to cover more uninsured children. President Bush has threatened to veto it.

The bipartisan bill before Congress and championed by Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley — which provides \$35 billion in additional funding over the next five years — would enable Iowa to expand its coverage of children by 10,500 more kids, in line with the bipartisan action taken by the Iowa General Assembly this session. That would reduce the number of uninsured children in Iowa by at least one-fifth, and serve children in working, low-income families who do not have private coverage.

President Bush's alternative — for \$5 billion more than currently provided over the next five years — would actually require Iowa and many other states to cut back on coverage. It would shift 5,000 or more Iowa children currently covered under *hawk-i* to the uninsured ranks. These are kids in working, low-income families.

CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATE: SEPT. 30, 2007 (SUNDAY AT MIDNIGHT)

SCHIP funds two programs in Iowa:

- The Healthy and Well Kids in Iowa, or *hawk-i* program, which covers about 22,000 kids.
- An expansion of Medicaid, which covers about 15,000 kids.

Iowans are most familiar with SCHIP because of the *hawk-i* program, which has been promoted and has seen enrollment nearly double in five years (from 2001-06).

ADDING 4 MILLION INSURED — AND THOUSANDS IN IOWA

BY THE NUMBERS IN IOWA:

- Fresh Census data released in August show that 44,000 Iowa children in 2006 were not insured at any time during the year.
- According to the state Department of Human Services, about 73 percent of uninsured Iowa children are eligible but not covered by public services such as Medicaid and *hawk-i*. The compromise legislation in Washington is a way the state can reach that pool of children.
- According to a new report from Families USA, the Senate-passed SCHIP bill, which is similar in scope to the compromise package being considered today in the House, would cover about 52 percent of Iowa's uninsured children. The Families USA report is on the web: < <http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/chip-kids-waiting.pdf> >

BY THE NUMBERS IN THE UNITED STATES:

- 9 million kids don't have insurance (out of 47 million Americans).
- 6 million are covered nationwide under SCHIP.
- 4 million kids would be added to coverage under the congressional agreement.

OF SPECIAL NOTE:

■ Most of those helped by SCHIP have not recently been covered by a private plan, as noted by the Economic Policy Institute. < http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_snapshots_20070912 >. This is in contrast to the President's claims that expanding health-care access through SCHIP would be at the expense of private coverage.

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