

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Schumer, and
Minority Leader Pelosi:

As organizations from every state and multiple fields dedicated to improving the well-being of children, we strongly urge you to keep the unique needs of children front and center and adopt a “do no harm” standard for children as you consider *any* changes to the nation’s health care system. Today, ninety-five percent of children in the United States have health coverage – an historic high – thanks in large part to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). We must continue to move forward, not backwards for children, their parents and pregnant women. Preserving and expanding child appropriate health coverage and access to quality care for children with special needs in school or in other child-serving systems will impact children’s opportunities to succeed. Unfortunately, the *American Health Care Act* would move children backwards.

To meet the “do no harm standard” for children, we stand united in urging you and the full Congress to:

- **Preserve and protect Medicaid’s funding structure that guarantees poor and low-income children and children with disabilities coverage for the services and treatment they need to survive and thrive.** Reject the per capita cap proposed for Medicaid in the *American Health Care Act* that will over time deny children critical care and disadvantage them throughout their lives. Any change to Medicaid disproportionately affects children, who constitute nearly half of Medicaid recipients – 37 million today. Over time the cap will also harm Medicaid’s comprehensive prenatal care for income eligible pregnant women in every state, including many high-risk pregnancies and coverage for nearly half of all births annually in the U.S. Medicaid also helps schools, child welfare agencies and other child serving systems get children the special help they need. All of this will be in jeopardy. Capping Medicaid spending does not create cost efficiencies; instead, it shifts costs from the federal government to states, counties, local communities, beneficiaries and providers. Such cost shifts will inevitably result in loss of or limits on health coverage for children and other vulnerable populations.

- **Protect the ACA's Medicaid expansion and continue coverage for low-income parents.** More than 11 million low income adults in 31 states and the District of Columbia are benefitting from expanded Medicaid under the ACA. Covering parents improves children's access to health insurance and health care. The Medicaid expansion has resulted in improved access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, especially critical now with the opioid crisis affecting families across the country. When parents get treatment for their own health and mental health problems, it strengthens children's developmental outcomes. The requirement for mental health and other essential health benefits for these parents will be eliminated if the *American Health Care Act* moves forward.

Investing in the health of children through consistent affordable health coverage yields a significant return on investment. Identifying and treating conditions early, before they become expensive long-term liabilities, is effective. Children with health coverage are more likely to attend school, graduate from high school, go to college, and become healthier adults, with higher taxable earnings than uninsured children. Ensuring children and their parents have access to the medically necessary services they need from providers trained to serve children is critical to positive outcomes. Medicaid helps child-serving systems ensure children quality health care:

- **Early Childhood:** Quality health coverage and care are essential for healthy brain development in children's early years, the years of greatest brain development. Early childhood teachers can help children learn and develop, but need help to provide the basic early intervention services children with special needs require to thrive. The ACA and Medicaid also help child care providers and other caregivers get health coverage to keep themselves healthy and able to care for others' children.
- **Education:** Since child health impacts educational attainment, any structural changes to Medicaid or loss of ACA coverage would compromise returns on major investments in children from Early Head Start to college. Medicaid reimburses schools for services delivered to children and the specialized staff who provide them, especially for children with disabilities, and also for students who get critical health services at school, such as vision and hearing screenings.
- **Child Welfare:** Medicaid offers treatment for substance abuse and mental health disorders that can otherwise result in children entering the child protection system and keeping them there. It helps state and local agencies get treatment to children in foster family homes, children with special needs in residential treatment, children who move from foster care to guardianship, and those with special needs adopted from foster care. It also provides therapeutic case management, co-location of health experts in child welfare offices, services and treatment for children in foster care with multiple complex needs and often their parents that help shorten their stays in foster care and reunite families.

- **Juvenile Justice.** While Medicaid cannot be used to care for youth in detention, it is an essential sometimes life-saving support for some youths with significant health or mental health needs as they transition out of detention and return to their family and community. It can help strengthen communities by preventing juveniles from re-offending.

We call on you and your colleagues in Congress to protect children’s health coverage as you consider the *American Health Care Act* and any reforms to the ACA and Medicaid. Any changes that move backwards and make children worse off by depriving them of comprehensive and affordable child-appropriate coverage will jeopardize not only their futures but the nation’s future economic and national security. We urge you to commit to build on the progress made over the past five decades to expand and improve health coverage for children, and, at a minimum, to “do no harm.”

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1,000 Days
 Accelify
 Adopt America Network
 AFSCME
 AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
 Alia
 American Academy of Nursing
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American Art Therapy Association
 American Dance Therapy Association
 American Federation of Teachers
 American Network of Oral Health Coalitions
 ARCH National Respite Coalition
 Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
 Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living
 Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc.
 Be Strong Families
 BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
 Campaign for Youth Justice
 Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
 Center for Public Interest Law
 Center for the Study of Social Policy
 Child Welfare League of America
 Children & Families First
 Children Awaiting Parents
 Children's Advocacy Institute
 Children's Defense Fund

Children's Dental Health Project
Children's Health Fund
Children's Home Society of America
Children's Leadership Council
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing)
Democrats for Education Reform
Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church
Easter Seals Blake Foundation
Every Child Matters
Family Focused Treatment Association
Family Network on Disabilities
Family Voices
First Focus Campaign for Children
First Star Institute
Foster Care Alumni of America
Funders Together to End Homelessness
Futures Without Violence
Generations United
Girls Inc.
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
GrandFamilies of America
Healthy Schools Campaign
Healthy Teen Network
International Dyslexia Association
Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Justice for Families
Justice Policy Institute
Juvenile Law Center
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lutheran Services in America
MomsRising.org
NAACP
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability
Directors
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment
(National PLACE)
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Child Abuse Coalition
National Children's Alliance
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Foster Youth Institute
National Health Law Program
National Immigration Law Center
National Indian Child Care Association
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Partnership for Juvenile Services
National Physicians Alliance
National Urban League
National Youth Advocate Program, Inc.
Nemours Children's Health System
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
North American Council on Adoptable Children
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Opportunity Action
PACER Center
Pan-Methodist Commission
Parents Anonymous Inc.
Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere (P.E.A.C.E.)
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
School Social Work Association of America
School-Based Health Alliance
Schott Foundation
Society of Pediatric Cardiovascular Nurses
Southern Poverty Law Center
SparkAction
TASH
Teach Plus
The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
The Arc of the United States
The Education Trust
The National Crittenton Foundation
Think of Us

Treatment Communities
United Way Worldwide
Voice for Adoption
W Haywood Burns Institute
Youth Villages
ZERO TO THREE

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

ALABAMA

Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics
Baptist Church of the Covenant
Children First Foundation
Family Voices of Alabama
VOICES for Alabama's Children

ALASKA

Alaska Children's Trust

ARIZONA

Arizona's Children Association
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers
Child and Family Resources, Inc.
Mentally Ill Kids In Distress (MIKID)
Mental Health America of Arizona
Open Heart Family Wellness
Our Family Services
Southwest Human Development, Inc.
The New Foundation

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
United Way of Ouachitas

CALIFORNIA

Allen Temple Baptist Church
American Nurses Association\California
California Conference for Equality and Justice
Children's Defense Fund - California
California Health Professional Student Alliance
California Physicians Alliance
California School Employees Association
California State Association of Counties
Californians For Justice
Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County
Child Guidance Center

Children Now
Clinica Sierra Vista
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Community Health Councils
Community Health Partnership
County Welfare Directors Association of California
Equality California
Family Voices of California
Hanna Boys Center
Khmer Girls In Action
Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Los Angeles LGBT Center
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Los Angeles Chapter
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — San Diego, California Chapter
NICOS Chinese Health Coalition
Northern California Collaborative for Pediatric Palliative Care
Tarzana Treatment Centers Inc.
The Children's Partnership
The Village Family Services
UC Davis Hemophilia Treatment Center
United Ways of California

COLORADO

All Kids Covered Colorado
Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program
Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition
Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families (COCAF)
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition
Colorado Head Start Association
Colorado School Medicaid Consortium
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition
Family Voices Colorado
Foothills United Way
Healthier Colorado
Kids First Health Care in Adams 14
Littleton #6, Arapahoe School District
Oral Health Colorado
Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics
SHS Adams Arapahoe 28J
Sunrise Community Health
The Adoption Exchange, Inc.

CONNECTICUT

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Connecticut Chapter
PATH Parent to Parent/Family Voices of CT
Yale University School of Medicine

DELAWARE

321foundation, Inc.
Autism Delaware
Delaware Family Voices
Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Children's Law Center
District of Columbia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

FLORIDA

Children's Home Society of Florida
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.

GEORGIA

Project Healthy Grandparents

HAWAII

Aloha United Way

IDAHO

Idaho Parents Unlimited
Idaho Voices for Children

ILLINOIS

American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago
Bethany for Children & Families
Camelot Care Centers, Inc.
Children's Home + Aid
Children's Therapy Center of the Quad Cities
Family Voices of Illinois
Illinois Collaboration on Youth
Rock Island County Council on Addictions (RICCA)
Rock Island County 708 Mental Health Board
The Community Church of Wilmette

INDIANA

Family Voices Indiana

IOWA

Child and Family Policy Center
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners – Iowa Chapter

KANSAS

Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children
Oral Health Kansas
United Way of Greater Topeka
United Way of the Flint Hills

KENTUCKY

Family & Children's Place
Kentucky Council of Churches

LOUISIANA

LouisianaChildren.org
Louisiana Association of United Ways
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
United Way of Southeast Louisiana

MAINE

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Council of Churches
New Directions for Maine Families
United Way of Mid Coast Maine

MARYLAND

Adoptions Together
Advocates for Children and Youth
Maryland Family Network
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Maryland Chesapeake Chapter

MASSACHUSETTS

Association for Behavioral Healthcare
Children's League of Massachusetts
Children's Trust of Massachusetts
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Citizens for Public Schools
JALSA - The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Messiah American Baptist Church
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Massachusetts Chapter
United Way of Franklin County, Inc.

MICHIGAN

Michigan's Children
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Michigan League for Public Policy
United Way Montcalm - Ionia Counties
United Way for Southeastern Michigan

MINNESOTA

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency
Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota
Children's Minnesota
Generations Health Care Initiatives
Portico Healthnet

MISSISSIPPI

ACLU of Mississippi
Children's Defense Fund - Southern Region
Mississippi Center for Justice
Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

MISSOURI

United Way of Southeast Missouri
Vision for Children at Risk

MONTANA

Bullhook Community Health Center

NEBRASKA

Holland Children's Movement
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska
Nebraska Appleseed
Nebraska Child Health & Education Alliance

NEVADA

Children's Advocacy Alliance
Nevada Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire
Community Support Network, Inc.
New Hampshire Family Voices

NEW JERSEY

Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Family Voices New Jersey
Monmouth Center for World Religions and Ethical Thought

MonmouthCares
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.
Robins' Nest Inc.
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
United Way of Northern New Jersey

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Pediatric Society
New Mexico Voices for Children

NEW YORK

Children's Aid Society
Children's Defense Fund - New York
First Baptist Church of Ithaca NY
Hudson Center for Health Equity & Quality
Institute for Community Living
Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church
Metro New York Health Care for All
New York Immigration Coalition
New York State Council of Churches
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
You Gotta Believe! The Older Child Adoption & Permanency Movement, Inc.

NORTH CAROLINA

Advocates for Medically Fragile Kids NC
FIRST
NC Child
NC Oral Health Collaborative
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — North Carolina Chapter
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina Pediatric Society
St. John's Baptist Church
Watts Street Baptist Church Peace and Reconciliation Mission Group
Woody's Mom, Inc.

NORTH DAKOTA

Family Voices of North Dakota
North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

OHIO

Children's Defense Fund - Ohio
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Equality Ohio
Family and Youth Law Center
Juvenile Justice Coalition (Ohio)
Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition

Ohio Council of Churches
Voices for Ohio's Children

OKLAHOMA

Choices for Life
The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
Oklahoma Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

OREGON

Children First for Oregon
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Oregon Chapter

PENNSYLVANIA

Augustinians of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Coatesville Citizens Who Seek Educational Equality
Comfort Consults, LLC
Disability Rights Pennsylvania
Education Plus Health
Family Services of Western Pa
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Pennsylvania – Delaware Valley Chapter
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Pennsylvania Three Rivers Chapter
PAR (Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability)
Parent Education Advocacy & Leadership (PEAL) Center
Pennsylvania Coalition for Oral Health
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
United Way of York County

RHODE ISLAND

Adoption Rhode Island
Economic Progress Institute
Rhode Island Community Action Association
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Rhode Island Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

SOUTH CAROLINA

Family Connection of South Carolina
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
South Carolina Christian Action Council

SOUTH DAKOTA

Child Advocacy Society of South Dakota
Children's Home Society of South Dakota
Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota

South Dakota Parent Connection

TENNESSEE

United Ways of Tennessee

TEXAS

Austin Heights Baptist Church

Center for Public Policy Priorities

Children's Defense Fund - Texas

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)

Easterseals Central Texas

Easterseals North Texas

Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston

First3Years

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Austin, Texas Chapter

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Greater Texas Chapter

National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter

Texas Care for Children

Texas Doctors for Social Responsibility

Texas Impact

TexProtects

United Ways of Texas

UTAH

Children's Service Society of Utah

Voices for Utah Children

VERMONT

Vermont Family Network

Vermont Fragile X Community Support Network

VIRGINIA

Disability Rights and Resource Center

Independence Empowerment Center

VA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Virginia AFL-CIO

Virginia Civic Engagement Table

Virginia Organizing

Virginia Poverty Law Center

Voices for Virginia's Children

WASHINGTON

Children's Alliance

Children's Home Society of Washington

Faith Action Network

Lifespan Respite Washington

Many Lights Foundation
Partners for Our Children
Treehouse
Washington Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
United Way of King County

WEST VIRGINIA

Children's Home Society of West Virginia
West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

WISCONSIN

Great Rivers United Way
Wisconsin Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
YWCA La Crosse

WYOMING

UPLIFT

Wyoming Association of Churches
Wyoming Children's Law Center, Inc.