

Protecting State CHIP: Vote NO on HB178

Published: Tuesday, 04 February 2025 14:22

Written by: Ciriac Alvarez Valle



37 ORGANIZATIONS, ENTITIES, AND BUSINESSES HAVE SIGNED ON TO PROTECT STATE CHIP

The 37 undersigned organizations and entities dedicated to the health and well-being of children and 90 individuals are writing in response to the recently introduced [HB178 Noncitizen Health Insurance Policies Amendments](#). This legislation would dismantle a policy that passed with broad legislative support and has made significant strides toward the health of all children in Utah.

State CHIP Helps to Address Children's Uninsured Rates in Utah

From 2016 - 2019, Utah saw an alarming trend in rising children's uninsurance rates. Currently, we continue to rank near the bottom nationally at #41, with 61,000 children lacking health insurance, with the highest gaps for our Latino and rural children. Additionally, uncompensated care has cost Utah's state and local governments about \$8.8 million annually.

In 2023, [SB217: Children's Health Coverage Amendments](#) was passed to bridge the existing gaps and lower the cost of uncompensated care for Utah kids. With

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overwhelming bi-partisan support in both chambers, this bill created a state-controlled children's health coverage program for children who meet income eligibility but are currently ineligible for existing programs due to their citizenship status.

State CHIP is Targeted and Responsible

State CHIP provides a targeted and narrow eligibility for certain working-class and established immigrant families in Utah that provide proof of income and residency. The program has built-in safeguards, including an enrollment cap and a restricted \$4.5 million cost paid by a private-public partnership that can consist of state and private funds. Currently, that program mirrors the federally funded CHIP program while only using state funds (no Medicaid funds are utilized for this program). Thanks to the State CHIP, these newly eligible children have access to pediatric primary care, dental care, and mental health services in a more coordinated approach instead of relying on emergency departments. Like other programs, parents contribute to the program through cost-sharing measures, including deductibles and copays.

State CHIP Helps Children and Families

State CHIP currently provides primary and preventative coverage for approximately 2,000 Utah children. Repealing the program would mean these children would lose access to the vital health care they need to ensure they reach their full potential. As organizations, we oppose measures like HB178 that would remove access to health coverage for thousands of children throughout the state.

Families like this one: A single mother of three had always felt the weight of supporting her family independently. One of her biggest concerns was the cost of speech therapy for her oldest son. As the sole provider, paying for therapy seemed impossible, and the stress of it was overwhelming. When her children were approved for State CHIP, everything changed. With the coverage in place, her son could start speech therapy. Now, she's already noticing improvements in his speech and feels relief knowing her son is receiving the care he needs.

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This policy is guided by compassion but driven by a fiscally responsible and measured approach to meet the health care needs of children while driving down costs of uncompensated care. We support ensuring these 2,000 Utah children can continue to have access to the healthcare they need by keeping the State CHIP Program and opposing HB178.

The following individuals and organizations stand united in support of this initiative:

- Alliance Community Services
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter
- Association for Utah Community Health
- Centro de la Familia
- Centro Hispano
- City of Kearns
- City of Millcreek
- Club Ability Foundation
- Comunidad Materna en Utah
- Comunidades Unidas
- Community Health Centers, Inc
- DDI Vantage, Early Intervention
- Disability Law Center
- Eastern Utah Early Intervention, Inc.
- Friends of the Children-Utah
- Holy Cross Ministries of Utah
- Ignite! Utah: A Program of the Utah Donor Collaborative
- Intermountain Children's Health
- Liz Tyler Law, PLLC
- Mark Miller Subaru
- Midtown Community Health Center
- Moab Free Health Clinic
- Moab Valley Multicultural Center
- Mormon Women for Ethical Government
- MomsRising
- Neighborhood House
- Pacific Island Knowledge To Action Resources
- Parents for Children

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- PIK2AR
- Penna Powers
- People's Health Clinic
- Root for Kids
- The Children's Center Utah
- Utah Community Health Worker Association
- United Way of Salt Lake
- University of Utah Health Plans
- Utah Health Policy Project
- Utah Private Child Care Association
- Voices for Utah Children
- Wasatch Immigration Attorney

- Alejandra Viviana Gonzalez
- Alison Fleming
- Alonso R. Reyna Rivarola
- Amanda McLearn-Montz
- Amy Smedley
- Amy Torres
- Ana Garcia
- Andrea Allison
- Andrea Jimenez
- Alexander Bybee
- Alexandra Villagran, MD
- Alex Collopy
- Anna Thomas
- Bailey Rivera-Wymes
- Barbara Reyes
- Bharat Sanders, MD
- Carlos Fernando Morales
- Carol Castaneda
- Cherie Wood
- Claudia Gutierrez Sanchez
- Connor Stephen Clay
- Cristina Bolanos

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- Crystal Martinez
- Danielle Sato
- Deborah Watters
- Diana Lopez
- Don DeLaMare
- Dwayne Hogan
- Edward Lopez
- Ellie Menlove
- Emily McKenzie
- Emily Roberson
- Erin Avondet
- Francisco J Roman
- Hannah Sherfinski
- Heidi Lynn Steidel
- James Jackson, III
- J'amie Pritchard
- Janie Belliston
- Jared Lawrence
- Jeff Schiff
- Jennifer Conley
- Jennifer Kaiser
- Jessica Purrington
- Jessica Smith
- John Mitchell Sowards
- Jorge Razo
- Judith Simmons-Kissell
- Julia Diane Miller
- Katie Wright
- Katherina Holzhauser
- Kathryn Reichert Barber
- Ken Perko
- Kenwyn Derby
- Kristen Durbin, MD
- Kyle Smith
- Leanne Freedman
- Liliana Martinez
- Lisa Smith

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- Luther Martin Gaylord
- Maggie Sherin
- Manuel De Lira
- Mariah Critchfield
- Maricela Vargas, Community Health Worker
- Mark Innocenti
- Mark Shepherd
- Marlene Gonzalez
- Mary Urie
- Max Olivier
- Mayor Dustin Gettel
- Mayra Cedano
- Michael Gura
- Miguel Trujillo
- Moe Hickey
- Nancy Lee Larson
- Nathan Money, DO
- Nicholle Pitt White
- Nicole Steffes
- Noriadnys Gomez
- Olga Lane Neal
- Olive Nyiramwiza
- Pamela Armenta
- Paula Covas-Lugo
- Paulina Devlin
- Rachelle Hardman
- Raquel Moser
- Raymond Ashton Cutler
- Robert K Lake
- Sara Gunderson-Muhlestein
- Sara McAllaster
- Sarah Elizabeth Christiansen
- Sarah J. Balland
- Stephanie Benally
- Steven R Lawrence
- Suzanne Fassler
- Tamera Marsden

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- Thaiss Del Rio
- Theresa Fassler
- Todd Holzhauser
- Vicente Alvarez Russell
- Victor Sotoseguel
- Wayne Welch
- William E. Cosgrove, MD
- Xochitl Juarez
- Ze Min Xiao

What Does State CHIP Do?

- **Provides essential care:** From routine checkups to life-saving treatments, State CHIP helps children thrive.
- **Support Working Families:** The program is designed strictly for families who meet specific income and residency requirements, ensuring resources go to those who need them most—and who contribute to our communities through taxes.
- **Saves Utah Money:** By focusing on preventive care, State CHIP reduces uncompensated care costs, saving the state millions annually.

Join us today in lifting your voice in support of State CHIP!

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