



# News Release

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## **PEDIATRICIANS SUPPORT SCHIP BILL PROPOSED BY HOUSE LEADERS**

**Washington, DC** – In a letter to leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means committees, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), representing 60,000 pediatricians, expressed support for their legislation to reauthorize the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), known as the Children’s Health and Medicare Protection (CHAMP) Act of 2007 (H.R. 3162).

“I write today to thank you for the hard work that you have undertaken to draft a substantive CHIP reauthorization,” wrote AAP President Jay E. Berkelhamer, MD, FAAP. “Pediatricians stand with you on this important legislation and will work tirelessly towards its passage.”

The AAP letter, sent today to Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) and Ways and Means Committee Chair Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY), highlighted the access to quality health care goals reached by CHAMP. “The commitment of \$50 billion to reach eligible children is laudable. Far from an expansion of the program, your measure focuses on reaching children who are, on paper, eligible for coverage under Medicaid or SCHIP. Without funding, however, a child is not really eligible for coverage.”

Dr. Berkelhamer noted other important components of the legislation that will strengthen and improve health care coverage for children. Those provisions will:

- Address the citizenship and identification documentation issues to prevent eligible children from losing access to Medicaid or SCHIP
- Clarify that Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) is still a requirement under benchmark plans approved under Deficit Reduction Act rules
- Include a substantive new effort to strengthen pediatric quality measurements
- Create the Children’s Access and Payment Equity Commission (CAPE), to raise the profile of the issue of children’s poor health care coverage options resulting from dismal payment rates under Medicaid and SCHIP

Dr. Berkelhamer thanked the House leaders for their efforts to focus on children in the SCHIP reauthorization legislation, and expressed concern over attempts to attach a health care tax credit proposal that has not been reviewed by any congressional body.

“The CHIP reauthorization is not the place to restructure the entire health care system with untested tax policy that may negatively impact children’s access to care,” wrote Dr. Berkelhamer.

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*The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.*