



# American Public Health Association

*Working for a Healthier World*

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## **The Truth About SCHIP and Undocumented Immigrants**

**CLAIM:** Bipartisan SCHIP bill opens Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program to illegal immigrants.

**TRUTH:** The bipartisan SCHIP reauthorization bill, if enacted, will provide 10 million low-income children from working class families with access to health insurance coverage including quality dental coverage, parity in mental health coverage and medically necessary benefits for low-income children.

Opponents object to a provision that would alleviate the burdensome requirements enacted in 2006. The 2006 provision requires proof of citizenship before an individual may enroll in the Medicaid program. Because of this provision, thousands of eligible children were removed from Medicaid or denied coverage and states experienced increased administrative costs as a result of ensuring compliance with this burdensome requirement. The provision included in the current SCHIP bill gives states more flexibility in ensuring that eligible children receive coverage. Governors from both parties support this provision.

**CLAIM:** The SCHIP bill is a multi-billion dollar giveaway to illegal immigrants.

**TRUTH:** Illegal immigrants are not eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP and would not be under the new SCHIP bill.

**TRUTH:** Immigrant children are much less likely to enroll in public coverage programs than U.S. born children

**CLAIM:** Illegal immigrants are a burden on the U.S. health care system.

**TRUTH:** Immigrant children have lower publicly financed health expenditures than do U.S. born children.

**TRUTH:** Studies show that total health care expenditures for immigrant children are 74% lower than U.S. born children.