

March 13, 2007

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Chairman, Senate Budget Committee
HSOB- Hart Senate Office Building, Room 530
Constitution Avenue and 2nd Street, NE
Washington, DC 20510-3403

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In January, our very diverse organizations announced an unprecedented agreement that proposes a significant expansion of health coverage to the uninsured – starting this year with America’s uninsured children.

That proposal represents a balanced approach, building on existing coverage systems in the public and private sectors. Our recommendations included additional federal funds to support the proposed expansion for uninsured children.

As the Budget Committee begins its consideration of the Budget Resolution, we urge you to give serious consideration to our recommendation about increased federal funding for children’s health coverage, through both public and private approaches.

Specifically, our funding recommendation proposes two things: first, that the approximate five-year, \$15 billion SCHIP shortfall be filled so that no child currently in that program loses health coverage; and second, that approximately \$45 billion in additional funds be made available over the next five years so that coverage can be provided to the millions of uninsured children who are currently eligible for SCHIP as well as expanding coverage in the private sector.

We recognize the many challenges faced by the Budget Committee as it tries to develop a responsible budget. We believe that, in facing those challenges, expanded health coverage for our nation’s uninsured children deserves highest-priority consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians	Families USA
American Hospital Association	Federation of American Hospitals
American Medical Association	Healthcare Leadership Council
American Public Health Association	Johnson & Johnson
America’s Health Insurance Plans	Kaiser Permanente
Ascension Health	Pfizer
Catholic Health Association	U.S. Chamber of Commerce