

September 14, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Finance

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Wyden, and Chairman Pallone,

We, the undersigned organizations representing consumers, family members, providers, advocates, payers, and other stakeholders committed to strengthening peoples' access to high-quality health coverage and care across America, urge you to include language that requires 12-month continuous eligibility for children on Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in the reconciliation package currently under development.

Medicaid and CHIP provide critical health coverage to more than 80 million Americans, including [45 million children](#), as well as pregnant women, people with disabilities, the working poor, and senior citizens. These coverage programs are a lifeline for millions of American families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicaid and CHIP have provided insurance against devastating illness and the financial consequences of the pandemic's economic downturn. Despite the importance of Medicaid and CHIP, serious issues must be addressed to stabilize coverage for the people they serve.

Collectively, we are concerned that millions of people enroll in Medicaid and CHIP each year only to subsequently [lose their coverage](#) – despite often still being eligible – because of the cycle of enrollment and disenrollment called “eligibility churn.” [Eligibility churn](#) is caused by inefficient paperwork and other reporting requirements or temporary income fluctuations. As the nation has grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year and a half, Medicaid enrollees have been protected by the [continuous eligibility protection](#) built into the *Families First Coronavirus Relief Act's* funding increase to states, which has temporarily halted the eligibility churn for people with Medicaid coverage. Children and pregnant women on CHIP have not received that protection.

Typically, [individuals on Medicaid](#) are covered for nine and a half months of the year; children are covered for just 10 months. Despite an existing state option for 12-month continuous eligibility for children, only 23 states have implemented this policy in Medicaid and only 25 have done so in CHIP. [Additional research](#) demonstrates that low-income individuals experiencing income volatility and the resulting loss of Medicaid eligibility do not transition to other forms of insurance, such as Marketplace or employer-sponsored coverage, and instead become uninsured. [Studies](#) show that communities of color are the most likely to experience income volatility each year. We know that interruptions in coverage worsen health outcomes and lead to avoidable hospitalizations or emergency room care for mental health disorders, asthma, and diabetes. Coverage gaps also raise the average monthly cost of Medicaid and result in higher avoidable administrative costs for states, health care providers, and health plans.

A [2020 report](#) found that from 2016 through 2018 in the states that have adopted continuous eligibility for children in Medicaid, 294,000 children had at least one preventive care visit; 93,000 kids got the specialty care they needed; and 261,000 kids had no gaps in coverage.

The report also found that extending 12-month continuous eligibility from 24 to 50 states would:

- Increase the number of kids receiving specialty care by 87 percent, from 93,000 to 174,000.
- Roughly double preventative care visits for children, from 294,000 to 585,000.
- Roughly double the number of kids with no gaps in coverage, from 261,000 to 520,000.

A policy of continuous eligibility – specifically, a federal requirement to cover children in Medicaid and CHIP – will provide 12 months of continuous and stable enrollment and will also allow Medicaid and CHIP programs to operate more like private coverage and Medicare. Stability in Medicaid and CHIP coverage will cut bureaucracy for states conducting screening and eligibility determinations and relieve excessive burden on providers that strive to ensure their patients retain coverage and access to care. It will help health providers and plans more readily maintain continuity of care management, which is vital to keeping children healthier. Most importantly, continuous eligibility will lessen financial stress and offer steady access to needed care for children on Medicaid and CHIP and their families.

We were pleased to see the Administration again recognize the importance of continuous eligibility when they recently [extended the timeframe](#) for states to complete pending eligibility and enrollment actions to twelve months after the month in which the public health emergency ends. Now, we ask Congress to build on that policy and include continuous eligibility in the reconciliation package to improve coverage for our nation’s children.

Sincerely,

#### **National Organizations**

AAHD  
AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
ACA Consumer Advocacy  
Academic Pediatric Association  
Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy  
African American Health Alliance  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
Alabaster  
Allergy & Asthma Network  
Alliance of Community Health Plans  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Surgeons  
American Dental Hygienists' Association

American Lung Association  
American Medical Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Public Health Association  
Association for Community Affiliated Plans  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
The Cave Institute  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Hospital Association  
Children's Rights  
Community Catalyst  
Easterseals  
Epilepsy Foundation

Epilepsy Information Service of Wake Forest School of  
Medicine  
Families USA  
Family Centered Treatment Foundation  
Family Voices  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Health Care Voices  
Hemophilia Federation of America  
Housatonic Community College  
The Jewish Federations of North America  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
March of Dimes  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National Health Council  
National Health Law Program  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Network for Arab American Communities  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
National WIC Association  
Nemours Children's Health  
Parents as Teachers  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians)  
RESULTS  
SchoolHouse Connection  
Society for Pediatric Research  
United Way Worldwide  
The Workers Circle  
Young Invincibles  
ZERO TO THREE

### **State/Local Organizations**

#### **Alabama**

Alabama Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

#### **Alaska**

AAP Alaska Chapter

#### **Arizona**

Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers  
Arizona Dental Hygienists' Association  
Child & Family Resources, Inc.

#### **Arkansas**

Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

#### **California**

AAP California Chapter 2  
AAP-Orange County Chapter  
African American Wellness Center for Children &  
Families  
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
Health Plan of San Mateo  
Inland Empire Health Plan  
Kern Health Systems  
The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health  
Orange County United Way  
Postpartum Health Alliance  
San Francisco Health Plan  
Santa Clara Family Health Plan

#### **Colorado**

AAP Colorado  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
The Consortium

**Connecticut**

CT Early Childhood Alliance

**Florida**

Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Florida Health Justice Project  
Florida Policy Institute  
Florida's Children First  
Hispanic Unity of Florida

**Georgia**

Georgia Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics

**Hawaii**

AlohaCare  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter

**Idaho**

Intermountain Healthcare

**Illinois**

Children's Home & Aid  
Erikson Institute  
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group  
Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

**Indiana**

Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**Iowa**

Blank Children's Hospital  
Common Good Iowa  
Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties

**Kansas**

Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
United Way of the Flint Hills

**Kentucky**

Kentucky Chapter of the AAP

**Louisiana**

St. John United Way  
United Way of Southwest Louisiana

**Maine**

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Opportunity Enterprises Incorporated

**Maryland**

Benedictine Sisters  
Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative  
Maryland Community Health System  
Montgomery County Federation of Families for  
Children's Mental Health

**Massachusetts**

BMC HealthNet Plan/Well Sense Health Plan  
MCAAP

**Michigan**

MIAAP  
Michigan Association of Health Plans  
Michigan Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics  
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Michigan League for Public Policy

**Minnesota**

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare  
Hennepin Health  
Hennepin Healthcare System  
Minnesota Association of County Health Plans  
Minnesota Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics  
South Country Health Alliance  
This is Medicaid Coalition

**Mississippi**

Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

**Missouri**

A Red Circle  
Bilingual International Assistant Services  
Kids Win Missouri  
Missouri Budget Project  
Missouri Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

**Montana**

Montana Chapter of the American Academy of  
Pediatrics

**Nebraska**

Nebraska Chapter AAP

**Nevada**

Intermountain Healthcare  
Nevada Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Children's Advocacy Alliance

**New Hampshire**

BMC HealthNet Plan/Well Sense Health Plan  
NHAAP

**New Jersey**

Family Voices NJ  
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction  
Agencies, Inc.  
New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

**New Mexico**

New Mexico Pediatric Society

**New York**

AAP New York Chapter 1  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY  
Metro New York Health Care for All  
NYS AAP - Chapter 2  
NYS AAP - Chapter 3  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York

**North Carolina**

Child Care Services Association  
Goldsboro Pediatrics, PA  
Interfaith Initiative for Social Justice  
Jubilee Community  
NC Pediatric Society  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Prevent Blindness North Carolina  
Trillium Health Resources

**North Dakota**

North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of  
Pediatrics

**Ohio**

The Ohio Council of Churches

**Oklahoma**

American Academy of Pediatrics - Oklahoma Chapter  
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

**Oregon**

CareOregon  
Oregon Pediatric Society  
Our Children Oregon

**Pennsylvania**

Allies for Children  
PA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

**Rhode Island**

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island

**South Carolina**

SC Chapter of the AAP

**South Dakota**

South Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of  
Pediatrics

**Tennessee**

Tennessee Health Care Campaign  
Tennessee Justice Center

**Texas**

Access Esperanza Clinics Inc.  
CHILDREN AT RISK  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Community Health Choice  
Cook Children's Health Plan  
Every Texan  
The Good Life Outcomes Program, at Change Happens!  
Harris Health System  
Houston Women March On  
Network of Behavioral Health Providers  
PediPlace  
Proyecto Azteca  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Medical Association  
Texas Pediatric Society, Texas Chapter of the AAP  
TexProtects  
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas  
United Way of Southern Cameron County  
UUFHCT

**Utah**

Association for Utah Community Health  
Intermountain Healthcare  
Voices for Utah Children

**Vermont**

American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter

**Virginia**

Social Action Linking Together (SALT)  
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations  
Virginia Poverty Law Center

**Washington**

Community Health Plan of Washington  
Northwest Harvest

**West Virginia**

West Virginians for Affordable Health Care

**Wisconsin**

Children's Community Health Plan  
Wisconsin Council of Churches

**Wyoming**

Foundation for the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming