

Campaign Seeks Help For Millions Without Health Insurance

Cover The Uninsured Campaign Focuses On Helping America's Uninsured Children

(NAPSA)—There are now nearly 45 million Americans without health insurance, including 9 million children—more than the total number of kids enrolled in the first and second grades in U.S. public schools—and the numbers could be even higher.

For the past 10 years, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, has provided health coverage to children whose parents cannot afford coverage or who are not offered health insurance through their jobs. Through the program, millions of children have access to a doctor when they are sick and get the health care that they need to stay healthy.

This year, SCHIP must be reauthorized by Congress in order to continue. The current funding levels for these state programs—set in 1997—are not adequate to keep up with the growing numbers of uninsured kids, so it will take an increase in federal funding just to cover kids currently enrolled in these programs, with more money needed to help the millions more uninsured children.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is focusing its *Cover the Uninsured* campaign in 2007 on the need for children to have health insurance. Now in its fifth year, the campaign is the largest

What is SCHIP?

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was authorized by Congress in 1997 to provide coverage for children living in families earning too much for Medicaid, but not enough to afford private insurance. Today, more than 6 million children are covered by SCHIP.



mobilization in history to shine a national spotlight on the need to secure health coverage for all Americans. The Foundation and the broad network of business owners, union members, teachers, students, consumers, doctors, nurses, faith leaders and others involved in this campaign are planning activities that highlight the success of SCHIP, demonstrate the ongoing need for ensuring that children have health coverage and enroll eligible families in insurance programs.

"The country's most successful effort to cover kids is in danger unless Congress and the president act decisively to reauthorize and expand SCHIP," said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "If they fail to renew and adequately fund the program, they will be

abandoning millions of uninsured children, and the nation will lose an important opportunity to make further progress in covering the uninsured."

The centerpiece of the effort is *Cover the Uninsured Week*, to be held April 23-29, 2007. Activities during the *Week* will include press conferences, enrollment activities, community forums, seminars for small businesses, educational events on campuses, faith-based activities and more.

"Covering children is an important first step in covering all Americans, and SCHIP is critical to achieving that goal," said Lavizzo-Mourey. "There has never been a more important time for us to come together and support federal efforts to provide health coverage to children. Congress must properly fund SCHIP and make America's uninsured their top priority."

In addition to pushing for SCHIP reauthorization and expansion, organizations nationwide will host events to enroll eligible children in existing public programs, such as SCHIP and Medicaid.

More information about the campaign and *Cover the Uninsured Week* activities is available at www.CoverTheUninsured.org.