

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Schumer, and  
Minority Leader Pelosi:

As organizations from every state and multiple fields dedicated to improving the well-being of children, we strongly urge you to keep the unique needs of children front and center and adopt a “do no harm” standard for children as you consider *any* changes to the nation’s health care system. Today, ninety-five percent of children in the United States have health coverage – an historic high – thanks in large part to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). We must continue to move forward, not backwards for children, their parents and pregnant women. Preserving and expanding child appropriate health coverage and access to quality care for children with special needs in school or in other child-serving systems will impact children’s opportunities to succeed. Unfortunately, the *American Health Care Act* would move children backwards.

To meet the “do no harm standard” for children, we stand united in urging you and the full Congress to:

- **Preserve and protect Medicaid’s funding structure that guarantees poor and low-income children and children with disabilities coverage for the services and treatment they need to survive and thrive.** Reject the per capita cap proposed for Medicaid in the *American Health Care Act* that will over time deny children critical care and disadvantage them throughout their lives. Any change to Medicaid disproportionately affects children, who constitute nearly half of Medicaid recipients – 37 million today. Over time the cap will also harm Medicaid’s comprehensive prenatal care for income eligible pregnant women in every state, including many high-risk pregnancies and coverage for nearly half of all births annually in the U.S. Medicaid also helps schools, child welfare agencies and other child serving systems get children the special help they need. All of this will be in jeopardy. Capping Medicaid spending does not create cost efficiencies; instead, it shifts costs from the federal government to states, counties, local communities, beneficiaries and providers. Such cost shifts will inevitably result in loss of or limits on health coverage for children and other vulnerable populations.

- **Protect the ACA's Medicaid expansion and continue coverage for low-income parents.** More than 11 million low income adults in 31 states and the District of Columbia are benefitting from expanded Medicaid under the ACA. Covering parents improves children's access to health insurance and health care. The Medicaid expansion has resulted in improved access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, especially critical now with the opioid crisis affecting families across the country. When parents get treatment for their own health and mental health problems, it strengthens children's developmental outcomes. The requirement for mental health and other essential health benefits for these parents will be eliminated if the *American Health Care Act* moves forward.

Investing in the health of children through consistent affordable health coverage yields a significant return on investment. Identifying and treating conditions early, before they become expensive long-term liabilities, is effective. Children with health coverage are more likely to attend school, graduate from high school, go to college, and become healthier adults, with higher taxable earnings than uninsured children. Ensuring children and their parents have access to the medically necessary services they need from providers trained to serve children is critical to positive outcomes. Medicaid helps child-serving systems ensure children quality health care:

- **Early Childhood:** Quality health coverage and care are essential for healthy brain development in children's early years, the years of greatest brain development. Early childhood teachers can help children learn and develop, but need help to provide the basic early intervention services children with special needs require to thrive. The ACA and Medicaid also help child care providers and other caregivers get health coverage to keep themselves healthy and able to care for others' children.
- **Education:** Since child health impacts educational attainment, any structural changes to Medicaid or loss of ACA coverage would compromise returns on major investments in children from Early Head Start to college. Medicaid reimburses schools for services delivered to children and the specialized staff who provide them, especially for children with disabilities, and also for students who get critical health services at school, such as vision and hearing screenings.
- **Child Welfare:** Medicaid offers treatment for substance abuse and mental health disorders that can otherwise result in children entering the child protection system and keeping them there. It helps state and local agencies get treatment to children in foster family homes, children with special needs in residential treatment, children who move from foster care to guardianship, and those with special needs adopted from foster care. It also provides therapeutic case management, co-location of health experts in child welfare offices, services and treatment for children in foster care with multiple complex needs and often their parents that help shorten their stays in foster care and reunite families.

- **Juvenile Justice.** While Medicaid cannot be used to care for youth in detention, it is an essential sometimes life-saving support for some youths with significant health or mental health needs as they transition out of detention and return to their family and community. It can help strengthen communities by preventing juveniles from re-offending.

We call on you and your colleagues in Congress to protect children’s health coverage as you consider the *American Health Care Act* and any reforms to the ACA and Medicaid. Any changes that move backwards and make children worse off by depriving them of comprehensive and affordable child-appropriate coverage will jeopardize not only their futures but the nation’s future economic and national security. We urge you to commit to build on the progress made over the past five decades to expand and improve health coverage for children, and, at a minimum, to “do no harm.”

Sincerely,

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

1,000 Days  
 Accelify  
 Adopt America Network  
 AFSCME  
 AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
 Alia  
 American Academy of Nursing  
 American Academy of Pediatrics  
 American Art Therapy Association  
 American Dance Therapy Association  
 American Federation of Teachers  
 American Network of Oral Health Coalitions  
 ARCH National Respite Coalition  
 Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
 Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living  
 Attachment & Trauma Network, Inc.  
 Be Strong Families  
 BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz  
 Campaign for Youth Justice  
 Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
 Center for Public Interest Law  
 Center for the Study of Social Policy  
 Child Welfare League of America  
 Children & Families First  
 Children Awaiting Parents  
 Children's Advocacy Institute  
 Children's Defense Fund

Children's Dental Health Project  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Home Society of America  
Children's Leadership Council  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing)  
Democrats for Education Reform  
Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church  
Easter Seals Blake Foundation  
Every Child Matters  
Family Focused Treatment Association  
Family Network on Disabilities  
Family Voices  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
First Star Institute  
Foster Care Alumni of America  
Funders Together to End Homelessness  
Futures Without Violence  
Generations United  
Girls Inc.  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
GrandFamilies of America  
Healthy Schools Campaign  
Healthy Teen Network  
International Dyslexia Association  
Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Justice for Families  
Justice Policy Institute  
Juvenile Law Center  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Lutheran Services in America  
MomsRising.org  
NAACP  
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association for Rural Mental Health  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability  
Directors  
National Association of County Human Services Administrators  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment  
(National PLACE)  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Center on Adoption and Permanency  
National Child Abuse Coalition  
National Children's Alliance  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Foster Youth Institute  
National Health Law Program  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Indian Child Care Association  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
National Juvenile Justice Network  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Partnership for Juvenile Services  
National Physicians Alliance  
National Urban League  
National Youth Advocate Program, Inc.  
Nemours Children's Health System  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
North American Council on Adoptable Children  
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition  
Opportunity Action  
PACER Center  
Pan-Methodist Commission  
Parents Anonymous Inc.  
Peace Educators Allied for Children Everywhere (P.E.A.C.E.)  
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
School Social Work Association of America  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Schott Foundation  
Society of Pediatric Cardiovascular Nurses  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
SparkAction  
TASH  
Teach Plus  
The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children  
The Arc of the United States  
The Education Trust  
The National Crittenton Foundation  
Think of Us

Treatment Communities  
United Way Worldwide  
Voice for Adoption  
W Haywood Burns Institute  
Youth Villages  
ZERO TO THREE

## **STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **ALABAMA**

Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics  
Baptist Church of the Covenant  
Children First Foundation  
Family Voices of Alabama  
VOICES for Alabama's Children

### **ALASKA**

Alaska Children's Trust

### **ARIZONA**

Arizona's Children Association  
Arizona Council of Human Service Providers  
Child and Family Resources, Inc.  
Mentally Ill Kids In Distress (MIKID)  
Mental Health America of Arizona  
Open Heart Family Wellness  
Our Family Services  
Southwest Human Development, Inc.  
The New Foundation

### **ARKANSAS**

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families  
United Way of Ouachitas

### **CALIFORNIA**

Allen Temple Baptist Church  
American Nurses Association\California  
California Conference for Equality and Justice  
Children's Defense Fund - California  
California Health Professional Student Alliance  
California Physicians Alliance  
California School Employees Association  
California State Association of Counties  
Californians For Justice  
Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County  
Child Guidance Center

Children Now  
Clinica Sierra Vista  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Community Health Councils  
Community Health Partnership  
County Welfare Directors Association of California  
Equality California  
Family Voices of California  
Hanna Boys Center  
Khmer Girls In Action  
Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church  
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Los Angeles Chapter  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — San Diego, California Chapter  
NICOS Chinese Health Coalition  
Northern California Collaborative for Pediatric Palliative Care  
Tarzana Treatment Centers Inc.  
The Children's Partnership  
The Village Family Services  
UC Davis Hemophilia Treatment Center  
United Ways of California

## **COLORADO**

All Kids Covered Colorado  
Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health  
Colorado Children's Campaign  
Colorado Children's Healthcare Access Program  
Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition  
Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved  
Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families (COCAF)  
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition  
Colorado Head Start Association  
Colorado School Medicaid Consortium  
Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition  
Family Voices Colorado  
Foothills United Way  
Healthier Colorado  
Kids First Health Care in Adams 14  
Littleton #6, Arapahoe School District  
Oral Health Colorado  
Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics  
SHS Adams Arapahoe 28J  
Sunrise Community Health  
The Adoption Exchange, Inc.

**CONNECTICUT**

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Connecticut Chapter  
PATH Parent to Parent/Family Voices of CT  
Yale University School of Medicine

**DELAWARE**

321foundation, Inc.  
Autism Delaware  
Delaware Family Voices  
Easterseals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore  
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Children's Law Center  
District of Columbia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**FLORIDA**

Children's Home Society of Florida  
Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.

**GEORGIA**

Project Healthy Grandparents

**HAWAII**

Aloha United Way

**IDAHO**

Idaho Parents Unlimited  
Idaho Voices for Children

**ILLINOIS**

American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago  
Bethany for Children & Families  
Camelot Care Centers, Inc.  
Children's Home + Aid  
Children's Therapy Center of the Quad Cities  
Family Voices of Illinois  
Illinois Collaboration on Youth  
Rock Island County Council on Addictions (RICCA)  
Rock Island County 708 Mental Health Board  
The Community Church of Wilmette

**INDIANA**

Family Voices Indiana

**IOWA**

Child and Family Policy Center  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners – Iowa Chapter

**KANSAS**

Kansas Action for Children  
Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children  
Oral Health Kansas  
United Way of Greater Topeka  
United Way of the Flint Hills

**KENTUCKY**

Family & Children's Place  
Kentucky Council of Churches

**LOUISIANA**

LouisianaChildren.org  
Louisiana Association of United Ways  
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families  
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children  
United Way of Southeast Louisiana

**MAINE**

Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Maine Council of Churches  
New Directions for Maine Families  
United Way of Mid Coast Maine

**MARYLAND**

Adoptions Together  
Advocates for Children and Youth  
Maryland Family Network  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Maryland Chesapeake Chapter

**MASSACHUSETTS**

Association for Behavioral Healthcare  
Children's League of Massachusetts  
Children's Trust of Massachusetts  
Citizens for Juvenile Justice  
Citizens for Public Schools  
JALSA - The Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  
Messiah American Baptist Church  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Massachusetts Chapter  
United Way of Franklin County, Inc.

**MICHIGAN**

Michigan's Children  
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
United Way Montcalm - Ionia Counties  
United Way for Southeastern Michigan

**MINNESOTA**

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency  
Children's Defense Fund - Minnesota  
Children's Minnesota  
Generations Health Care Initiatives  
Portico Healthnet

**MISSISSIPPI**

ACLU of Mississippi  
Children's Defense Fund - Southern Region  
Mississippi Center for Justice  
Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

**MISSOURI**

United Way of Southeast Missouri  
Vision for Children at Risk

**MONTANA**

Bullhook Community Health Center

**NEBRASKA**

Holland Children's Movement  
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska  
Nebraska Appleseed  
Nebraska Child Health & Education Alliance

**NEVADA**

Children's Advocacy Alliance  
Nevada Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire  
Community Support Network, Inc.  
New Hampshire Family Voices

**NEW JERSEY**

Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Family Voices New Jersey  
Monmouth Center for World Religions and Ethical Thought

MonmouthCares  
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.  
Robins' Nest Inc.  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
United Way of Northern New Jersey

### **NEW MEXICO**

New Mexico Pediatric Society  
New Mexico Voices for Children

### **NEW YORK**

Children's Aid Society  
Children's Defense Fund - New York  
First Baptist Church of Ithaca NY  
Hudson Center for Health Equity & Quality  
Institute for Community Living  
Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church  
Metro New York Health Care for All  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York State Council of Churches  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy  
You Gotta Believe! The Older Child Adoption & Permanency Movement, Inc.

### **NORTH CAROLINA**

Advocates for Medically Fragile Kids NC  
FIRST  
NC Child  
NC Oral Health Collaborative  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — North Carolina Chapter  
North Carolina Council of Churches  
North Carolina Pediatric Society  
St. John's Baptist Church  
Watts Street Baptist Church Peace and Reconciliation Mission Group  
Woody's Mom, Inc.

### **NORTH DAKOTA**

Family Voices of North Dakota  
North Dakota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

### **OHIO**

Children's Defense Fund - Ohio  
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption  
Equality Ohio  
Family and Youth Law Center  
Juvenile Justice Coalition (Ohio)  
Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition

Ohio Council of Churches  
Voices for Ohio's Children

**OKLAHOMA**

Choices for Life  
The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy  
Oklahoma Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

**OREGON**

Children First for Oregon  
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Oregon Chapter

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Augustinians of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Coatesville Citizens Who Seek Educational Equality  
Comfort Consults, LLC  
Disability Rights Pennsylvania  
Education Plus Health  
Family Services of Western Pa  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Pennsylvania – Delaware Valley Chapter  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Pennsylvania Three Rivers Chapter  
PAR (Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability)  
Parent Education Advocacy & Leadership (PEAL) Center  
Pennsylvania Coalition for Oral Health  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
United Way of York County

**RHODE ISLAND**

Adoption Rhode Island  
Economic Progress Institute  
Rhode Island Community Action Association  
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT  
Rhode Island Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Family Connection of South Carolina  
SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
South Carolina Christian Action Council

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Child Advocacy Society of South Dakota  
Children's Home Society of South Dakota  
Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota

South Dakota Parent Connection

**TENNESSEE**

United Ways of Tennessee

**TEXAS**

Austin Heights Baptist Church

Center for Public Policy Priorities

Children's Defense Fund - Texas

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)

Easterseals Central Texas

Easterseals North Texas

Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston

First3Years

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Austin, Texas Chapter

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners — Greater Texas Chapter

National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter

Texans Care for Children

Texas Doctors for Social Responsibility

Texas Impact

TexProtects

United Ways of Texas

**UTAH**

Children's Service Society of Utah

Voices for Utah Children

**VERMONT**

Vermont Family Network

Vermont Fragile X Community Support Network

**VIRGINIA**

Disability Rights and Resource Center

Independence Empowerment Center

VA Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Virginia AFL-CIO

Virginia Civic Engagement Table

Virginia Organizing

Virginia Poverty Law Center

Voices for Virginia's Children

**WASHINGTON**

Children's Alliance

Children's Home Society of Washington

Faith Action Network

Lifespan Respite Washington

Many Lights Foundation  
Partners for Our Children  
Treehouse  
Washington Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics  
United Way of King County

**WEST VIRGINIA**

Children's Home Society of West Virginia  
West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**WISCONSIN**

Great Rivers United Way  
Wisconsin Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services  
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families  
YWCA La Crosse

**WYOMING**

UPLIFT  
Wyoming Association of Churches  
Wyoming Children's Law Center, Inc.