

# Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

## Advocacy Toolkit

November 2017

*For child health advocates & partner organizations*

**Congress failed to extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) before it expired on September 30.**

This missed deadline has real implications for real children and families across the country.

It is critical that Congress acts immediately to extend funding for the program for five years. Several leading child health and advocacy organizations shared that message in this [statement](#).

With every day that passes after the deadline, millions of children, pregnant women and families are left with more uncertainty about whether or not they will be able to access the health care they rely on. This is unacceptable.

Right now, **we need as many voices coming together as possible to tell Congress to extend funding for the program without delay.**

We encourage you to use the resources and information in this toolkit to join our efforts and amplify the message that Congress cannot wait any longer to take action. In particular, we are planning **a Day of Action on Wednesday, November 1** – more information [below](#). Please feel free to share this information far and wide within your networks. Thank you for your continued commitment to speaking up for children, pregnant women and families.

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### State of Play

CHIP was created in 1997 with overwhelming bipartisan support. Authorization and funding for the program has been renewed several times over the past 20 years, including most recently in 2015. However, Congress failed to extend federal funding for CHIP before it expired on September 30, 2017.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on extending CHIP funding in June, while the Senate Finance Committee held its own hearing on September 7. Both hearings featured testimony from state CHIP directors and health policy experts emphasizing the importance of immediately extending funding past FY17. These experts highlighted that many states were just weeks away from setting in motion processes to establish waiting lists and send out disenrollment notices to families. Once undertaken, these actions would have an immediate effect, creating chaos in program administration and confusion for families.

### **In the Senate:**

On September 14, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) announced a verbal agreement to extend CHIP funding for five years, and on September 18, the Senate Finance Committee introduced legislation, the Keep Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act of 2017, that would do just that. The legislation would maintain the Affordable Care Act's 23 percent increase in the federal matching rate to states through 2019, change to 11.5 percent for 2020, and return to a traditional CHIP matching rate for 2021 and 2022. In addition, the legislation would create protections under the maintenance-of-effort provision.

On October 4, the Senate Finance Committee passed the KIDS Act without amendment. The bill awaits action on the Senate floor. Here is the AAP's [letter](#) of support on the KIDS Act.

### **In the House:**

In the House, Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) released a partisan CHIP extension bill called the Helping Ensure Access for Little Ones, Toddlers, and Hopeful Youth by Keeping Insurance Delivery Stable (HEALTHY KIDS) Act of 2017 and the committee marked up the bill October 4th. On CHIP policy, the bill is nearly identical to the Senate bill but it contains controversial and harmful offsets that democrats and child advocates oppose.

Here is AAP's [letter](#) to committee leadership on the bill. AAP applauded their commitment to a long-term funding extension, but urged any extension not contain offsets that harm providers, patients or access to care.

An updated version H.R. 3922, the CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act of 2017, was released on October 30. The bill combines the reauthorization of CHIP funding with the extension of other health programs and is currently advancing in the House. While the bill includes sound policy that pediatricians support—extending CHIP for five years, stabilizing enrollment, and preserving current funding levels through 2019—it is paid for in a way that may harm children's health. Specifically, the bill cuts the Prevention and Public Health Fund, makes risky changes to Medicaid financing and puts in place new barriers for families to access affordable health care coverage in the private marketplace. Here is AAP's [statement](#) on the revised bill.

A vote on the bill is expected on Friday, November 3, where it is expected to pass. While the Senate will likely take up the strong reauthorization provisions of the core program, the way the reauthorization is paid for in the House bill is unlikely to pass the Senate's 60 vote threshold.

Congress still has several steps to take before CHIP funding is extended. House and Senate leadership must agree on the details of a final bill, get it on the legislative calendar, and secure the votes for its passage before sending it to President Trump for final approval.

## **Upcoming Advocacy Opportunities**

### **#ExtendCHIP Day of Action**

The Academy is hosting an **#ExtendCHIP Day of Action on Wednesday, November 1**. Throughout the day, we encourage advocates to contact their members of Congress, share messages on social media and amplify the message that Congress must immediately extend CHIP funding for five years. By concentrating our efforts, we hope to elevate the conversation on CHIP and draw attention to the urgency around extending funding.

The hashtag for the Day of Action will be **#ExtendCHIP**.

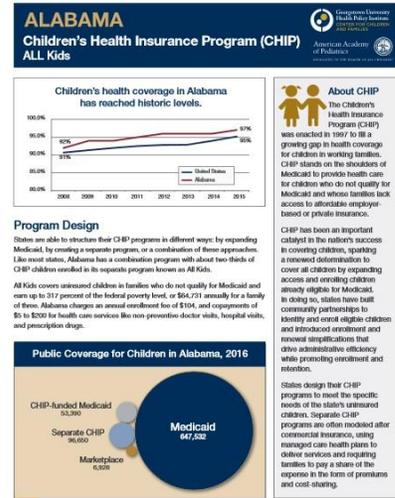
We encourage you to use the sample messages in this toolkit throughout the day. We have strength in numbers, and we hope you can join us!

## Earned media opportunities

Local perspectives published on the pages of newspapers across the country are powerful. Please feel free to use the messages and state-specific data in this toolkit to draft and submit op-eds and letters-to-the-editor to your state newspaper on the need to extend CHIP funding without delay.

## CHIP State Fact Sheets

For state-specific data on CHIP, be sure to check out [these fact sheets](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families (pictured right). The fact sheets are labeled as “CHIP Fact Sheet” under each state name. We encourage you to incorporate this state-specific data into your advocacy messaging.



## Social Media Messages

**Hashtags to Use:** #ExtendCHIP (primary hashtag for days of action), #CHIPworks, #KeepKidsCovered

**Handles for all U.S. Senators:** <https://twitter.com/cspan/lists/senators/members>

**Handles for all U.S. Representatives:** <https://twitter.com/cspan/lists/u-s-representatives>

*Be sure to use .@ if you are beginning your tweet with a Twitter handle, as indicated below. There is no need for a period before the @ sign if a twitter handle is not in the beginning of the tweet.*

Calling (list @Legislatorhandles)! It's been over a month since CHIP funding expired. Time is running out for **xxxx** kids in (your state)! #ExtendCHIP

Every day that Congress fails to #ExtendCHIP puts 9 million children's health coverage in danger.

Consistent coverage = healthy kids. @GeorgetownCCF report shows how #CHIPworks to #KeepKidsCovered! <http://bit.ly/2eLByjr> #ExtendCHIP

Time is up (list @Legislatorhandles)! #ExtendCHIP now to protect **xxxx** kids in (your state)! (link to and pull data from your state fact sheet from [this page](#) under “CHIP fact sheet”)

Why is CHIP important? Uninsured children are 5x more likely to have an unmet need for medical care. #ExtendCHIP

CHIP helps keep kids healthy by covering doctor visits, immunizations, care for coughs & colds, labs, X-rays & hospital stays #ExtendCHIP

#CHIPworks to #KeepKidsCovered: CHIP is helping 9M kids get check-ups, immunizations, prescriptions & more! #ExtendCHIP

#CHIPworks b/c it's affordable for families, covers age-appropriate services & includes children's hospitals & specialists. #ExtendCHIP

As a (parent/physician/etc) in {state}, CHIP keeps my (family/children/patients) healthy. Congress: #ExtendCHIP!

CHIP is a bipartisan success story that 9 million children depend on. Congress: #ExtendCHIP now!

[https://filemanager.capwiz.com/filemanager/filemgr/aap/Children's Groups CHIP Deadline Statement 9 29 17.pdf](https://filemanager.capwiz.com/filemanager/filemgr/aap/Children's%20Groups%20CHIP%20Deadline%20Statement%209%2029%2017.pdf)

More than 120 children's health, medical & advocacy groups agree: #CHIPworks for children. Congress, #ExtendCHIP! <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/federal-advocacy/Documents/NationalGroupsCHIPStatement.pdf>

Every day past CHIP's funding deadline 9/30, more and more families face an uncertain future. Congress, #ExtendCHIP now!

## Contact Your Members of Congress

Please consider reaching out directly to your members of Congress and urging them to extend CHIP funding for five years.

### **Talking points**

Please feel free to use the talking points below to call your legislators. To find your senators, go to [Senate.gov](http://Senate.gov) and “Find Your Senators” in the upper left-hand corner. To find your representative, go to [House.gov](http://House.gov) and “Find Your Representative” in the upper right-hand corner. Their official .gov websites will have their DC Office contact information.

- Hello. As a constituent of {your state}, I am calling today to urge {Senator's/Representative's name} to pass legislation that would extend current level funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years and maintain the bipartisan history of the program.
- CHIP funding expired on September 30<sup>th</sup>. This missed deadline has real implications for real children and families. With every day that passes after the deadline, millions of children, pregnant women and families are left with more uncertainty about whether or not they will be able to access the health care they rely on.
- Without certainty from Congress on CHIP funding, states will be forced to make drastic cuts to the program. This could mean slashing enrollment, reducing benefits, and imposing higher costs for families.
- CHIP is a bipartisan success story. The program was created in 1997 and has been championed by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle since its very beginning.
- Nearly 9 million children across the country are enrolled in the program. CHIP stands on the shoulders of Medicaid to cover children in working families who are not eligible for Medicaid and lack access to affordable private coverage.
- Nineteen states also use CHIP to extend coverage to pregnant women, removing barriers to pregnancy coverage and prenatal care for about 370,000 women each year.
- The program is designed around what children need. It offers benefits that are age-appropriate, including dental coverage and mental health and substance abuse services, which may not be covered by a family's employer-sponsored insurance.
- CHIP plans include networks of pediatricians, pediatric medical and surgical subspecialists, and children's hospitals, which are especially critical for children with special health care needs.

- Families who rely on CHIP already face uncertainty and challenges, whether managing a complicated health condition for their child or determining how to afford day-to-day living expenses. The last thing these families need is added uncertainty about the future of their children’s medical and dental coverage or whether they will have access to necessary prenatal care services.
- By not acting in a timely manner to renew CHIP funding, Congress has caused them to face the threat of losing coverage altogether.
- CHIP’s proven track record of providing high-quality, cost-effective coverage for low-income children and pregnant women in working families must be continued. Please take immediate action to extend current level CHIP funding for five years.
- Thank you.

## Other Helpful Resources

- A [statement](#) from several child health organizations following Congress’ failure to extend CHIP funding for its expiration date
- A new [report](#), “Multi-generational Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net: Early Life Exposure to Medicaid and the Next Generation's Health”
- A [report](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation, “Current Status of State Planning for the Future of CHIP”
- A [fact sheet](#), “Children’s Health Insurance Program: Setting the Record Straight”
- A [statement](#) from the National Governors Association on CHIP extension