

May X, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of XX organizations dedicated to promoting the health of our nation's children and pregnant women, we write to voice our strong opposition to the White House's proposal to rescind \$7 billion dollars of funding from the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). This proposal violates the bipartisan budget agreement that Congress and the President reached earlier this year to set funding levels for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 and would put children's access to health insurance coverage in jeopardy. We urge you to reject the proposal and any attempt to reduce government spending on the backs of children's health.

Earlier this year, Congress passed – and the President signed – a law authorizing funding for CHIP for an additional 10 years. In passing the 10-year extension of CHIP, Congress acted on a bipartisan basis to provide stability for the program that states, families, and providers sought. The bills signed by President Trump that extended CHIP for 10 years protect coverage for children, give families peace of mind, and enable states to make investments that strengthen and improve their CHIP programs. Rescinding such a substantial sum from CHIP as is contemplated in the rescissions package would undermine the very program Congress intended to strengthen.

Specifically, the White House is proposing to rescind \$15 billion in previously approved spending, almost half of which would come from two accounts in CHIP, to reduce budget deficits. The proposed cuts would come from cutting \$2 billion from the Child Enrollment Contingency Fund, which provides payments to states if they experience an unexpected surge in enrollment. The fund ensures that eligible children can continue to get covered. The White House also proposes to rescind \$5 billion from the Children's Health Insurance Fund.

While White House officials insist that the CHIP cuts would not harm access to care for children and families, that is simply not the case. Our nation is facing an increasing number of natural disasters, including a devastating hurricane season that has displaced thousands of children and families and an ongoing disaster in Hawaii. Each catastrophe leaves families more vulnerable and more likely to qualify for CHIP. In addition to natural disasters, the Child Enrollment Contingency Fund provides states needed protection and security should their CHIP enrollment suddenly spike due to an economic recession or a public health crisis.

The nine million children and families who depend on CHIP have already faced months of uncertainty, when its funding expired before Congress took long-overdue action to extend CHIP funding for ten years. After breathing a short sigh of relief, however, the long-term stability and protection these families fought to ensure is once again in jeopardy. Our organizations urge you to protect children and families, and to reject any proposed cuts to the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics