

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Advocacy Toolkit

January 2018

For pediatricians and AAP chapters

Monday, January 8th marks 100 days since Congress failed to extend long-term funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Congressional inaction has created a dire situation for children, families and state legislatures. The patchwork solutions from Congress fail to provide the stability needed to ensure that this successful bipartisan program can continue to be there for the 9 million children who depend on it.

As families begin a new year, they must be reassured that their children will not go a single day without health care coverage.

Congress must pass a spending bill to avert a federal government shutdown by January 19. As part of that vote, we are urging lawmakers to take immediate action and extend CHIP funding for five years.

As a pediatrician, it is critical that your members of Congress hear this message from you. Please consider joining us for a **#SaveCHIP Day of Action on Wednesday, January 10**, to amplify this message. We encourage you to use the resources available in this toolkit to participate – the more voices that join together at the same time with the same message, the most likely Congress will be compelled to act. So whether it's making phone calls to your federal legislators, sharing messages on social media or engaging your colleagues in those activities, please join us in whatever way you can on January 10th!

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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.

What's next:

Before leaving Washington in December for the holiday recess, Congress passed short-term funding for the program as part of its larger spending bill. While the legislative language states the patch runs through March 30, 2018, states and experts estimate the funding will run out far sooner than that.

States have already started to notify families that they may not have a source of coverage should Congress fail to enact a long-term extension of CHIP funding, and several states have started to use funds meant to operate the program to start shutting it down. The short-term CHIP funding is not enough to prevent states from continuing these actions, and only causes more chaos and confusion on the ground.

Following Congress' failure to extend CHIP long-term before leaving for the holiday recess, AAP released this [statement](#) with other national children's advocacy organizations saying, "the greatest threat to children's health care coverage is congressional inaction."

To avert a government shutdown, lawmakers will need to pass a spending bill by January 19, 2018, when the current funding runs out.

The AAP is advocating for an immediate 5-year extension of CHIP as part of that vote, and is urging that the program is extended in a bicameral, bipartisan fashion, without cutting funding for programs important to children and pediatricians and without harming patients, providers, or access to care.

Meanwhile, states continue to unveil their plans to freeze, amend, or end their CHIP programs in the face of ongoing federal funding uncertainty.

Upcoming Advocacy Opportunity

AAP and other leading children's health organizations are hosting a **#SaveCHIP Day of Action on Wednesday, January 10**. 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 #SaveCHIP. 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!

CHIP State Fact Sheets

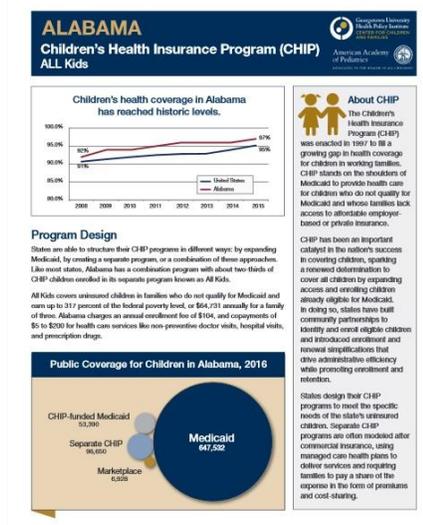
The Academy recently worked with Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families to create fact sheets on CHIP for each state. The fact sheets can be found [here](#) labeled as "CHIP Fact Sheet" under each state name. We encourage you to incorporate this state-specific data into your advocacy messaging.

Contact Your Members of Congress

Please consider reaching out directly to your federal legislators and urging them to extend CHIP funding for five years.

How to Call Your Members of Congress: To reach your members of Congress, please call **(877) 233-9025** and the operator will direct you to the DC Offices of your federal legislators. We've included the talking points below to help guide your call.

Talking points



- Hello. I am pediatrician from **{your state}** and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am calling today to urge **{U.S. Senator's name/U.S. Representative's name}** to pass legislation immediately that would **extend current funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years and maintain the bipartisan history of the program.**
- **CHIP funding expired over 100 days ago.** Now, families are facing uncertainty and entering the new year without knowing if their children will have health care coverage.
- **The short-term solutions Congress has offered so far do not give families the relief they need** so that their children can access care, and also fail to address states' funding concerns. **States and families need stability.**
- Because CHIP funding has not been extended, states have been forced to make difficult choices as they question the future of their CHIP programs. Actions include sending notices to families that they may not be able to rely on CHIP for more than another month or two. Already several states are using funds meant to operate the program to begin the process of shutting it down.
- It doesn't have to be this way. 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 creation.
- 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.
- 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.
- **Please extend current CHIP funding for five years immediately. Inadequate, patchwork funding is not the answer.** As families begin a new year, they must be reassured that their children will not go a single day without health care coverage.
- Thank you for all you do for children.

Email form letter

The latest email form letter can be found on federaladvocacy.aap.org under the Advocacy Action Center by clicking on "[Extend CHIP Funding for Five Years Without Delay](#)." There, you will be directly connected to your federal legislators. The text is also below:

Subject: Extend CHIP funding for Five Years Without Delay

As a pediatrician and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am urging you to pass legislation immediately that would extend current funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years and maintain the bipartisan history of the program.

CHIP funding expired over 100 days ago. Now, families are facing uncertainty and entering the new year without knowing if their children will have health care coverage.

The short-term solutions Congress has offered so far do not give families the relief they need so that their children can access care, and also fail to address states' funding concerns. States and families need stability.

Because CHIP funding has not been extended, states have been forced to make difficult choices as they question the future of their CHIP programs. Actions include sending notices to families that they may not be

able to rely on CHIP for more than another month or two. Already several states are using funds meant to operate the program to begin the process of shutting it down.

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Please extend current CHIP funding for five years immediately. Inadequate, patchwork funding is not the answer. As families begin a new year, they must be reassured that their children will not go a single day without health care coverage.

Thank you for all you do for children.

CHIP State Graphics for Social Media

The Academy recently created state-by-state infographics to be shared on social media, calling on Congress to extend CHIP funding. This [document](#) includes all of the graphics, by state, sized for both Twitter and Facebook.

Social Media Messages

Hashtags to Use: [#SaveCHIP](#) (primary hashtag), [#ExtendCHIP](#), [#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.

Retweet <https://twitter.com/AmerAcadPeds/status/948622619032637440>

Because CHIP funding has not been extended long-term, states have been forced to make difficult choices as they question the future of their CHIP programs. Children's access to coverage hangs in the balance. Congress: [#SaveCHIP](#) by extending it for 5 years!

ATTN (list @Legislatorhandles): Children and families should not have to face uncertainty when it comes to their health care coverage. It's time for Congress to [#ExtendCHIP](#) long-term. [#SaveCHIP](#)

Welcome back to work ([list @Legislatorhandles](#))! The short-term CHIP funding that was passed before the holiday recess does not provide the stability that **xxxx** kids in **(your state)** need. It's time to #ExtendCHIP long-term! #SaveCHIP

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

As a pediatrician in **{state}**, CHIP keeps my patients healthy. ([list @Legislatorhandles](#)) please work to #ExtendCHIP long-term! #SaveCHIP (*link to your state fact sheet from [this page](#) under "CHIP fact sheet"*)

CHIP is a bipartisan success story that 9 million children depend on. Families and states need stability, and what they've gotten from congressional inaction is uncertainty. Congress: #SaveCHIP now!

Children are counting on Congress to #SaveCHIP. It's bipartisan, it works, & it must be funded. [@Legislatorhandles](#) please support **(your state)**'s kids and act now to pass a long-term extension!

Other Helpful Resources

- A [statement](#) from the AAP and other leading children's health groups after Congress failed to extend CHIP funding before leaving for the holiday recess, and another [statement](#) from earlier in December
- A [letter](#) AAP joined with nearly 900 organizations, urging Congress to extend CHIP funding
- Several news articles and segments on CHIP, featuring pediatricians: [MSNBC](#), [Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien](#), [ABC News](#), [NBC News](#), [CNN](#), [NPR](#), [New York Times](#), [WebMD](#), and [KSAT ABC 12](#)
- A [letter](#) from a bipartisan group of 12 governors, urging Congress to extend CHIP funding
- An [infographic](#) from the National Academy for State Health Policy, "State Checklist for Shutting Down CHIP Programs"
- AAP's [statement](#) on the House CHIP bill