PHYSICIANS FOR POLICY ACTION

October 10, 2017

Dear Legislator,

We represent a group of 120 academic physicians and healthcare providers based at Harvard Medical School. As physicians, we are committed to the wellbeing of our nation's children. We are writing today to urge you to support the Keep Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act of 2017, which will extend the current level of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years. The KIDS Act is more important now than ever, as funding for CHIP has already lapsed and children and families are waiting in a state of great uncertainty, wondering how they will pay for their health care needs.

As you probably know, CHIP covers approximately 9 million children in the US today, which is around 10% of the US childhood population. CHIP is a program designed to help protect kids who would otherwise fall between the cracks in terms of healthcare funding. The program is designed around what children need. It offers benefits that are age-appropriate, including dental coverage, mental health and substance abuse services, which may not be covered by a family's employer-sponsored insurance.

As doctors who care for children and their families, we have the privilege of getting to know many patients who rely on CHIP funding. Imagine being the parent of a teen struggling with mental health issues and not having the insurance coverage that will allow you to access the medications and counseling your child needs. Or, imagine if your child needed asthma prescriptions just to help her breathe, but your employer-sponsored coverage left you with an unmanageable co-pay. These are just a few of the scenarios that families will find themselves in if CHIP coverage is not renewed.

Families deserve the peace of mind of knowing that they will be able to access the care and support services their children rely on to be healthy. And, healthy kids make a healthy country!

We urge you to come together to support the bipartisan KIDS Act of 2017.

Sincerely,

Asha Leichtman, MD
Stephanie Friend, MD
Gracia Kwete, MD
Jill Kulla, MD
Kathleen McFadden, MD
Kelsey Hills-Evans, MD
Akash Gupta, MD
Rachel Erdil, MD
Lianna Karp, MD