



UPDATE ON HEALTH COVERAGE FOR CHILDREN

MAY 12, 2005

The 100% Campaign – a joint effort of Children NOW, Children's Defense Fund, and The Children's Partnership – and PICO California, a network of 17 California congregation/community organizations, have moved forward to sponsor legislation to ensure health insurance coverage for all California children.

Two companion bills (identical bills in both houses) have been introduced:

SB 437 (Escutia/Alquist) passed successfully out of the Senate Health Committee on April 13 and the Senate Banking Committee on April 20, and is now before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 772 (Chan/Frommer) passed successfully out of the Assembly Health Committee on April 26 and will be heard next in Assembly Appropriations.

The bills are among the few large coverage expansion proposals to remain viable this legislative year. Notably, these bills have received votes from both Democrats and Republicans – a rarity in the current legislative environment where most health bills succeed or fail along partisan lines.

Specifically, the bills would

1. Provide health insurance options for every uninsured child in California.
2. Make it easier for families to enroll and keep their children covered.
3. Build on the successes of local Children's Health Initiatives (CHI's).
4. Create a system of shared responsibility for financing.
5. Phase in the program on a timetable consistent with strong management and available resources.

The bills are currently in their respective Appropriations committees, and must be off the suspense files by May 27 and out of their houses of origin by June 3. See a fact sheet on the bills at <http://www.100percentcampaign.org/assets/pdf/fs-healthy-families-050330.pdf>

The Assembly Health Committee has an excellent analysis of AB 772, which includes an extensive list of more than 60 organizational supporters and one opponent (the California Right to Life Committee). Go to <http://www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/acsframeset2text.htm>, type in AB 772, and then go to the Analyses.

Town Hall Meeting a Rousing Success

On April 13, PICO California and the 100% Campaign organized a town hall meeting in support of expanded children's health insurance. More than 4,200 people attended! Twenty state legislators participated and listened to parents and youth talk about how lack of health insurance has impacted their lives. Speakers at the town hall included Cheyanne Cook from the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Scott Hauge from Small Business California, Bishop Richard Garcia from the Diocese of Sacramento, John Monahan from Teachers for Healthy Kids, Dr. Bob Ross from The California Endowment, and Leona Butler from the Santa Clara Family Health Plan.

For Updates

For more information on the 100% Campaign and/or to sign up for biweekly e-alerts on the Californians for Healthy Kids effort, go to <http://www.100percentcampaign.org/index.htm>