



Next year Congress will decide whether to renew the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides 6 million children with affordable health coverage.

If Congress does not add additional money to SCHIP as many as 1.5 million children could lose their health coverage – thousands of children in every community will be affected.

PICO's network of local and regional federations and 1,000 faith communities are asking parents, religious leaders, educators and pediatricians to begin talking about what is at stake.

What can you do?

- **Get the facts:** Find out how many children in our community depend on SCHIP for their health coverage? How many children would lose coverage if new funding is not added to SCHIP? How many children in our community lack health coverage and would benefit from expansion of the program?
- **Talk to working parents who depend on SCHIP** or might need this choice in the future. Make sure they know about what is at stake in the debate over SCHIP?
- **Talk with teachers, clergy and health professionals** about their concerns about SCHIP reauthorization? Bring people together to discuss how your community can organize to take a stand on for children's health?
- **Meet with your elected officials**, including your Governor and your members of Congress to discuss how they are going to protect children and the millions of dollars that your state receives from Washington, D.C. to help support children's health.



What is at stake in SCHIP

- SCHIP is a **lifeline** for 6 million children whose parents cannot obtain family coverage at work.
 - SCHIP provides parents with **the choice of affordable health coverage** so that their children have regular pediatricians and get preventative treatment that keeps kids out of emergency rooms.
 - SCHIP and the broader Medicaid program are important pieces of our health care **infrastructure** in every community in the United States. These federal-state partnerships are **success stories**. They help keep families and communities healthy, while saving money from costly emergency room visits for the uninsured.
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The children's health debate in Washington, DC

- When Congress returns in January it will need to decide whether to **renew SCHIP with enough funding so 1.5 million children do not lose health coverage**. Already 17 states have run short on federal SCHIP monies and face the nightmare of cutting children off of insurance. It will cost at least \$14 billion in additional funds over five years to keep currently enrolled children covered.
 - America is at a **crossroads on children's health**. Next year provides an opportunity to move forward toward the historic goal of covering all children by expanding SCHIP and strengthening the Medicaid program. Under-funding SCHIP or cutting Medicaid to keep SCHIP going would set back hard-won progress and leave millions of children without coverage.
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PICO's Healthy Families Campaign

- PICO, a national network of one thousand religious congregations and schools in 150 cities and 18 states, has been working on a **step-by-step** campaign to expand access to health care to the uninsured. PICO's San Jose affiliate helped create **the first county program to cover all children**, an initiative that has been replicated in more than half the counties in California.
- PICO and its 53 affiliated federations are working to make sure that **parents, pediatricians, educators, and religious leaders** know what is at stake in the debate over SCHIP. As we work to protect SCHIP and Medicaid, we are advancing a national campaign to cover all children.
- **PICO's agenda for SCHIP reauthorization** includes enough funding to protect children now enrolled, without putting Medicaid at-risk; incentives for states to expand eligibility and reach out to eligible children; support for innovative outreach programs; policies that cut red tape to increase enrollment among eligible children; and incentives to increase workplace coverage.
- PICO federations are working together on children's health because **we want all parents to be able to raise healthy children, which includes having access to affordable health coverage**.