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Governor Wolf Signs Bill to Protect Children’s Health Care, Urges Federal Action

Philadelphia, PA – With state legislators, cabinet officials, health care providers, families, and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) administration and clinicians joining him, Governor Tom Wolf today held a bill signing of legislation to protect children’s health care through state funding of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, commonly known as CHIP.

“I am proud to sign this legislation that represents Pennsylvania’s bi-partisan commitment to securing health insurance for our most vulnerable – our children and pregnant women,” said Governor Wolf. “However, this is just one step in ensuring children are cared for. Congress needs to do its part and reauthorize CHIP at the federal level. Without federal funding, more than 180,000 children in Pennsylvania could be without health care in early 2018.”

Federal funding accounts for 90 percent of the \$450 million CHIP budget. Congress failed to reauthorize CHIP before the Sept. 30 deadline and has not yet addressed funding for the more than 9 million children nationally who benefit from it.

“The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides comprehensive coverage to over 6,000 patients at CHOP,” said Madeline Bell, President and CEO of Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. “Without it, children and their families face uncertainty. The bill signed by Governor Wolf in our hospital today is one of two very important steps that make CHIP available to Pennsylvania’s children. Now, Congress needs to fund CHIP so that these children get the healthcare they deserve.”

Acting Secretary for the Department of Human Services Teresa Miller conveyed the need for federal funding.

“Since 2009, more than 850,000 kids have enrolled in CHIP in the commonwealth,” said Secretary Miller. “Despite all the families helped by CHIP and the access to high quality health care coverage it provides, the program will no longer exist unless Congress acts.”

Gov. Wolf was among a group of bi-partisan governors who sent a [letter](#) to Congressional leaders earlier this week urging them to take action and reauthorize CHIP, “For twenty years, [CHIP] has successfully provided vital health coverage and care to about nine million children. Without it, access to essential health services like well child exams, asthma medicine, and hospitalizations will be at risk. As health insurance premiums climb at unsustainable rates, this program gives hard-working families access to otherwise unaffordable coverage.”

Pennsylvania's CHIP legislation was sponsored by Representative Rich Irvin.

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