

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Members of Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we respectfully urge you to reconsider the recent administrative rules that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released on August 17, 2007 modifying the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) eligibility standards. If implemented, the new requirements will result in the devastating loss of health coverage for many Latino children.

SCHIP plays a vital role in reducing racial and ethnic health disparities and has successfully decreased the number of uninsured Latino children. Since 1997, the rate of uninsured Latino children decreased by nearly one-third, from 30 percent to 21 percent. However, of nine million uninsured children, 3.5 million are Latino. More than 70 percent of uninsured Latino children are eligible for public coverage, but are not currently enrolled.

We are concerned that the new regulations will undermine the success of SCHIP and will increase the number of uninsured Latino children, possibly causing permanent harm to the health of our nation's children. The Administration's new policy requires 95 percent of eligible children under 200 percent of the federal poverty level to be enrolled before SCHIP eligibility can be expanded. Currently, at least one-third of states cover children above 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and additional states plan to cover children at or above this level. The new restrictions will result in the loss of coverage for tens of thousands of children and could hinder efforts underway by states working to cover more children. We are also extremely concerned with the rule that requires children to be uninsured for a full year. It is an injustice that children will be forced to forgo the care they need to live long and healthy lives.

As Members of Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we reiterate our opposition to CMS' new requirements and urge you to retract them. We look forward to working with you to protect the health of Latino children in America.

Sincerely,



Alucis

Grace F. Napolitano

Adam O. Ortiz

Lucille Roybal-Alcala

Rubin Ferojosa

Raul M. Hijal

Ed Pastor

Joseph P. ...

Charles A. ...

Chris V. ...

Chris D. ...

Melio M. ...

John T. ...

Jose E. ...