

## Children and Public Programs

It is the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics that health care reform should:

- ★ Provide all children with high quality affordable health care.
- ★ Have a comprehensive age appropriate benefits package directed to the special needs of the pediatric population as recommended by the Academy.
- ★ Provide every child a medical home.
- ★ Include payment rates assuring that children receive all recommended and needed services.

### The Issue

Although Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) have helped reduce the number of uninsured low-income children by one third over the last decade, more than nine million infants, children, adolescents and young adults under age 22 lack basic health care coverage—nearly one-fifth of the nation's uninsured population. Additionally, due to rising health care costs, declines in employer-based coverage, and the economic recession, we expect to see an increase in the number of uninsured children. Insured children may also have decreased access to care due to inappropriate benefits and/or low payment.

### Current Status

**Medicaid:** During tough economic times more families, low income and middle class, are forced to turn to Medicaid for health care. However, due to the counter-cyclical nature of Medicaid financing, state budgets are in crisis when there is the greatest need for support. While President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, it included only a temporary increase of \$87 billion to the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage for state Medicaid programs.

**CHIP:** Reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program was an essential down payment on health reform, but it is not health reform for children. We applaud Congress and the President for making the reauthorization a priority of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress and one of the first major Acts signed into law by the Obama Administration.

**MediKids:** The MediKids Health Insurance Act, the Academy's gold standard of care for children, would create a streamlined and comprehensive system that would achieve the goal of health insurance for all children regardless of family income. On Tuesday, January 6, 2009 Congressman Pete Stark (D-CA) reintroduced the MediKids Health Insurance Act.