



MediKids

Health reform should include MediKids. The time is right to make the health and well-being of America's children a national priority. Providing health security to children is achievable, affordable, and necessary. Parents should have the peace of mind of knowing that regardless of their financial situation, their children will never be without health insurance coverage. MediKids will provide that security.

The Issue

MediKids comes closest to all health reform proposals introduced in Congress at embodying the Academy's Access Principles. Not only would the legislation create health insurance coverage for millions of uninsured children, adolescents and young adults, but children will greatly benefit from MediKids' automatic enrollment, comprehensive benefits, and seamless coverage regardless of their parents' income. Under MediKids there would be no means testing, no outreach problems, and the program would exist as the ultimate safety net of health insurance for all children.

MediKids would:

- ★ Automatically enroll every child at birth and guarantee coverage through age 23.
- ★ Eliminate eligibility based on family income—unlike Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- ★ Maintain private commercial insurance. Parents can choose to keep private insurance or enroll their child in Medicaid or CHIP.
- ★ Automatically cover children's health insurance needs during any lapse in private or public coverage.
- ★ Simplify administrative hassles by decreasing complex billing procedures.
- ★ Improve payment for physician services. A payment schedule for physicians participating in the MediKids program will be developed with input from pediatricians. Payment rates, at minimum, will equal Medicare rates.
- ★ Offer the benefits that children need. The basic benefit package in MediKids places an emphasis on preventive health care, and provides age-appropriate and comprehensive services for children.
- ★ Make good economic sense. The focus on the medical home and comprehensive primary care will reduce the need for emergency room visits, hospital admissions and referrals to specialists; it improves payment of providers and reduces cost-shifting.

Current Status

MediKids, HR 194 and S. 958, has been introduced by Rep. Fortney H. "Pete" Stark (D-CA), chairman of the US House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee and Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), chairman of the US Senate Finance Health Subcommittee. Even with the CHIP reauthorization, according to a report from the Center for American Progress, the ongoing economic and unemployment crisis could add as many as one million children to the rolls of the uninsured.