

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

For Immediate Release March 21, 2010

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Press Statement

on

HOUSE PASSAGE OF HEALTH REFORM LEGISLATION

By: Judith S. Palfrey, MD, FAAP, President, American Academy of Pediatrics

“The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which represents 60,000 pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and surgical specialists, commends the United States House of Representatives for its vote tonight to pass its health reform legislation. The AAP endorsed this modified health reform package last week, and applauds the House of Representatives for its landmark vote and steadfast commitment to passing significant health reform legislation this year.

“The House’s health reform measure, coupled with the already passed Senate bill, will help children and the pediatricians who care for them. The Academy’s highest priorities in health reform continue to be: coverage for all children in the United States, age-appropriate benefits in a medical home, and appropriate workforce improvements and payment rates to allow real access to covered services. Each of these goals is addressed in the health reform package that was voted on tonight:

- The measure will include pediatric primary care and subspecialty workforce improvements, and for the first time ever, a federal commitment to improve Medicaid payment. This provision will improve Medicaid payment to a floor of 100 percent of Medicare payment for evaluation and management codes for physicians with a pediatric designation starting in 2013. This \$8.3 billion investment of new federal funding over 10 years is a historic step forward in recognizing that Medicaid payment must improve.
- All *Bright Futures* services—the definitive standard of pediatric well-child and preventive care—will be covered for children with private and public insurance as an immediate benefit with no co-payment. In addition, the essential benefits package in health insurance exchange plans will include rehabilitative, habilitative, mental and behavioral health services, vision and oral health, and other pediatric services for children. The legislation also includes a new commitment in Medicaid to expand the medical home in communities and practices.

- The measure will preserve the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) with funding until the end of fiscal year 2016 and includes a renewed federal funding commitment to states through 2019. Thirty-one million children, parents and individuals are projected to gain insurance coverage if this measure becomes law, decreasing uninsurance in the United States by more than half.

“The Academy acknowledges that the health reform package is not perfect and there are still outstanding issues related to fair provisions for immigrant children, funding for CHIP, payment for subspecialty services, and medical liability provisions. Nevertheless, the current health reform measure contains many strong provisions for children and pediatricians.

“The House of Representatives’ important vote places us as a nation at the closest point we have ever been to passing health reform legislation. The Academy urges the Senate to act swiftly and decisively to meet the needs of children and enable pediatricians to care for their health and well-being. We must continue to make the life success of every child our highest national priority.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.