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ACY celebrates 3rd anniversary of CHIP reauthorization

Since 2009, CHIPRA has provided health coverage to an additional 1.2 million children

Baltimore, MD – Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY), whose mission is promote policies and programs that improve results for Maryland children in measurable and meaningful ways, celebrates the third anniversary of the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) tomorrow with a call to action for federal authorities to enroll even more children in the program over the next three years.

Despite the flagging economy, the number of uninsured children in America decreased by 1.2 million since CHIPRA was signed into law on February 4, 2009. While the children’s poverty rate increased by 3.4 percent between 2008 and 2010, the children’s uninsured rate decreased by 1.3 percent over the same period of time, according to the Census’ American Community Survey data.

“Meeting the challenge of covering every child will require more public education, but states also need to streamline their process for enrolling children,” said Becky Wagner, Executive Director of ACY. Maryland’s success in this area was just recognized by a CHIPRA bonus, which was based on its efforts around streamlining eligibility and enrolling more children. ACY is working to protect children as the new Maryland Health Benefit Exchange Act is being developed.

The reauthorization of CHIP expanded the successful children’s program, and was one of the first major pieces of legislation signed by President Obama. The program helps children and pregnant mothers with family income too low to afford health coverage but too high for other services. The Maryland Children’s Health Program (MCHP) provides coverage for almost 100,000 children in Maryland.

“The Children’s Health Insurance Program has proven vital for families struggling to provide care for their children,” said Bill Bentley, president and CEO of Voices for America’s Children. “Even during the worst of this ‘Great Recession,’ CHIPRA has contributed to a drop in the number of uninsured children. This progress, which has brought the children’s uninsured rate in this country to its lowest level on record, is even more striking given that childhood poverty and adult uninsured rates jumped sharply over the same time period.”

ACY is a member of Voices for America’s Children, the nation’s largest network of multi-issue child advocacy organizations. Voices for America’s Children was one of the first national organizations to accept U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius’s “Connecting Kids to Coverage” challenge to insure the five million children eligible for CHIP and Medicaid health services but not currently enrolled in either program.

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Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) was founded in 1987 by a group of prominent child advocates in Maryland who saw the need for an independent organization to advocate for the needs of the state's children and families in the community, the media and the public policy arena. ACY's mission has remained unchanged since its founding: to identify problems, promote policies and programs that improve results for Maryland children in measurable and meaningful ways, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies for the state's children and youth.