



Maternal and Child Health Coalition of Greater Kansas City

Press Release

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Is It Good For Our Children? Dialogue on SCHIP and Early Childhood Education

Kansas City, MO – Maternal and Child Health Coalition will convene a discussion on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Early Childhood Education during its Annual Legislative Program on Friday, October 26th from 8:20 – 10:30 a.m. in Curry Auditorium located inside the Research Medical Center Brookside Campus. The program will feature expert speakers from the area's leading children's advocacy and early childhood education organizations who will talk about the relevance of SCHIP in the states of Missouri and Kansas as well as funding realities for both issues on a state and national level. Elected representatives from both states will give the audience a glimpse into the legislative processes related to both SCHIP and Early Childhood Education.

Recently, President Bush vetoed a bill that would have expanded government health insurance for children. Nearly one in five Americans under the age of 65 were without health insurance in 2005, a number that has continued to increase in the last decade. The demographics of the nearly 45 million uninsured are a mix of people living below the poverty line, young people and others. Over the past decade, new and expanded government programs such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program have made progress in covering children under age 19. According to a Kaiser Commission study, the percentage of low-income children without health insurance fell by about one-third between 1997 and 2004. Nevertheless, there are still more than 8 million uninsured children in the United States. In Missouri, approximately 63,000 children rely on SCHIP. Over 190,000 Missouri children are uninsured and an estimated 2/3 of these children are eligible for either Medicaid or SCHIP.

In Kansas, SCHIP covers 35,000 children in families with incomes between 100 and 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

The speakers include Suzanne Wikle, Director of Health Policy for Kansas Action for Children, Emily Smith, Government and Public Affairs Manager, Citizens for Missouri's Children, Dr. Jim Caccamo, Director of Early Learning at Mid-America Regional Council, and Mary Baskett, Executive Director of the Kansas Head Start Association. Participating legislators from Missouri are Margaret Donnelly, D-73, Jeff Grisamore, R-47, Rebecca Payne McClanahan, D-2, Beth Low, D-39, and from Kansas Sue Storm, D-22, Terrie Huntington, R-25, Valdenia Winn, D-34, and Senator David Haley, D- 4.

A Q&A session will follow the speakers' presentation. Participants are welcome to stay after the event to learn about action strategies. This event will take place on Friday, October 26th from 8:20 – 10:30 a.m. at Curry Auditorium located in the Research Medical Center Brookside Campus (Formerly Baptist-Lutheran Hospital), 6675 Holmes, Kansas City, MO. Media representatives can park in Lot B. **For more information, call Paul Cesare at (816) 283-6242 Ext. 239.**

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Maternal and Child Health Coalition promotes the health of mothers and children through community planning, education, advocacy and collaboration with organizations addressing infant mortality, immunizations, childhood obesity, maternal health and child safety. Interviews are available upon request. A copy of this press release is posted on <http://www.mchc.net/PressReleases.htm>.