

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Advocacy Toolkit

November - December 2017

For pediatricians and AAP chapters

It has been about two months since Congress failed to extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which expired on September 30.

The message from AAP is clear: **It should not take children losing their health insurance for Congress to act.**

As the days and weeks pass after the deadline, millions of children and families are left with more uncertainty about whether they will be able to access the health care they rely on. In addition, states are facing their own uncertainty as they await an extension of federal CHIP funding, which would ensure their CHIP programs can continue on sound financial footing. Read [below](#) for more information on where efforts stand in both the House and Senate.

Congress must act immediately to extend funding for the program for five years. Children and families cannot wait any longer. The Academy has been leading advocacy efforts in coordination with other child health groups to amplify this message.

As a pediatrician, it is critical that your members of Congress hear from you about the urgent need to extend funding for CHIP for five years. You can add your voice to these efforts using the resources compiled in this toolkit.

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State of Play

CHIP was created in 1997 with overwhelming bipartisan support. Authorization and funding for the program has been renewed several times over the past 20 years, including most recently in 2015. However, Congress failed to extend federal funding for CHIP, which expired on September 30, 2017.

In the Senate:

On September 18, the Senate Finance Committee introduced bipartisan legislation, the Keep Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act of 2017, that would extend CHIP for five years, protecting the program's bipartisan history, and would also maintain current CHIP policy with some minor changes to the federal match rate.

On October 4, the Senate Finance Committee passed the KIDS Act without amendment. The bill awaits action on the Senate floor. Here is the AAP's [letter](#) of support on the KIDS Act.

In the House:

The House passed an updated version of H.R. 3922, the CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act of 2017, on November 3, which combines the reauthorization of CHIP funding with the extension of other health programs. While the bill includes sound policy that pediatricians support—extending CHIP for five years, stabilizing enrollment, and preserving current funding levels through 2019—it is paid for in a way that may harm children's health. Specifically, the bill cuts the Prevention and Public Health Fund, makes risky changes to Medicaid financing and puts in place new barriers for families to access affordable health care coverage in the private marketplace. Here is AAP's [statement](#) on the revised bill.

What's next:

No timing for consideration of a CHIP reauthorization bill has been announced in the Senate. The Senate is unlikely to take up the House-passed bill due to objections in the Senate to the ways CHIP is paid for in the House bill.

Congress still has several steps to take before CHIP funding is extended. House and Senate leadership must agree on the details of a final bill and secure the votes for its passage before sending it to President Trump for final approval. It is possible that a final CHIP funding bill may be attached to another bill moving through Congress.

Upcoming Advocacy Opportunities

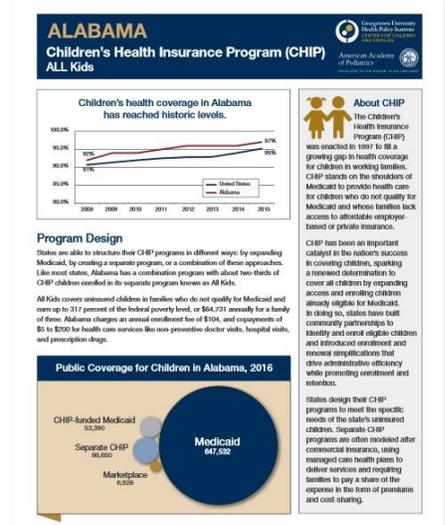
#ExtendCHIP Day of Action: Thursday, November 30

AAP is hosting an **#ExtendCHIP Day of Action on Thursday, November 30**, two months after CHIP funding expired. Throughout the day, we encourage advocates to contact their members of Congress, share messages on social media and amplify the message that Congress must immediately extend CHIP funding for five years. By concentrating our efforts, we hope to elevate the conversation on CHIP and draw attention to the urgency around extending funding.

The hashtag for the Day of Action will be **#ExtendCHIP**. We encourage you to use the sample messages in this toolkit throughout the day. We have strength in numbers, and we hope you can join us!

CHIP State Fact Sheets

The Academy recently worked with Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families to create fact sheets on CHIP for each state. The fact sheets can be found [here](#) labeled as "CHIP Fact Sheet" under each state name. We encourage you to incorporate this state-specific data into your advocacy messaging.



CHIP State Graphics for Social Media

The Academy recently created state-by-state infographics to be shared on social media, calling on Congress to extend CHIP funding. This [document](#) includes all of the graphics, by state, sized for both Twitter and Facebook. An example graphic is right!



Social Media Messages

Hashtags to Use: **#ExtendCHIP** (primary hashtag for days of action), #CHIPworks, #KeepKidsCovered

Handles for all U.S. Senators: <https://twitter.com/cspan/lists/senators/members>

Handles for all U.S. Representatives: <https://twitter.com/cspan/lists/u-s-representatives>

Be sure to use .@ if you are beginning your tweet with a Twitter handle, as indicated below. There is no need for a period before the @ sign if a twitter handle is not in the beginning of the tweet.

Calling (**list @Legislatorhandles**)! It's been two months since CHIP funding expired. Time is running out for **xxxx** kids in (**your state**)! #ExtendCHIP

It shouldn't take a child losing access to health insurance to get Congress to act. #ExtendCHIP & keep 9 million children covered!

Consistent coverage = healthy kids. @GeorgetownCCF report shows how #CHIPworks to #KeepKidsCovered!
<http://bit.ly/2eLByjr> #ExtendCHIP

Time is up (**list @Legislatorhandles**)! #ExtendCHIP now to protect **xxxx** kids in (**your state**)! (*link to and pull data from your state fact sheet from [this page](#) under "CHIP fact sheet")*)

Why is CHIP important? Uninsured children are 5x more likely to have an unmet need for medical care.
#ExtendCHIP

#CHIPworks to #KeepKidsCovered: CHIP is helping 9 million kids get check-ups, immunizations, prescriptions & more! #ExtendCHIP

As a pediatrician in (**state**), CHIP keeps my patients healthy. Congress: #ExtendCHIP! (*link to your state fact sheet from [this page](#) under "CHIP fact sheet")*)

CHIP is a bipartisan success story that 9 million children depend on. Congress: #ExtendCHIP now!

More than 120 children's health, medical & advocacy groups agree: #CHIPworks for children. Congress, #ExtendCHIP! <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/federal-advocacy/Documents/NationalGroupsCHIPStatement.pdf>

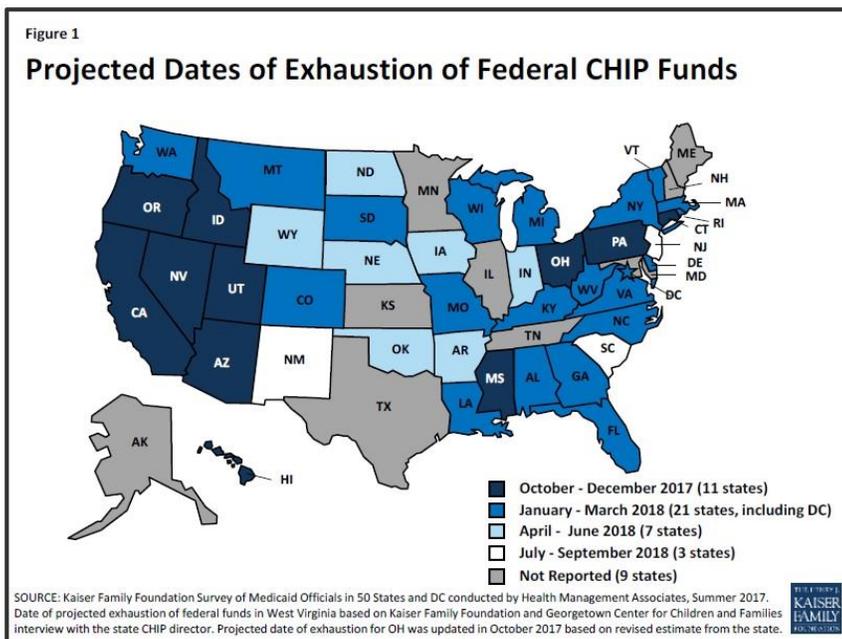
Every day past CHIP's funding deadline 9/30, more and more families face an uncertain future. Congress, #ExtendCHIP now!

Children are counting on Congress to #ExtendCHIP. It's bipartisan, it works, & it must be funded. Congress, please act now!

Additional State-Specific Information

The following states are projected to exhaust federal funding before 2018: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Utah. Additionally, [West Virginia](#), Colorado, Utah, Arizona, [Texas](#) and Minnesota have all detailed pieces of their processes for planning for the exhaustion of their federal funding for CHIP.

The map below from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows the projections of when states are expected to exhaust their federal CHIP funds. More information [here](#).



Contact Your Members of Congress

Please consider reaching out directly to your senators and urging them to extend CHIP funding for five years.

Talking points

Please feel free to use the talking points below to call your legislators. To find your senators, go to [Senate.gov](#) and “Find Your Senators” in the upper left-hand corner. Their official .gov websites will have their DC Office contact information.

- Hello. I am pediatrician from **{your state}** and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am calling today to urge **{Senator's name}** to pass legislation that would **extend current funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years and maintain the bipartisan history of the program.**
- **CHIP funding expired about two months ago.** It should not take children losing their health insurance for Congress to act.
- **Real children and families are facing the implications and the ongoing uncertainty** about whether or not they will be able to access the health care they rely on.
- Because CHIP funding has not been extended, states have been forced to make difficult choices as they question the future of their CHIP programs. Actions range from slashing enrollment and reducing

benefits to imposing higher costs for families, to potentially eliminating CHIP altogether. Already several states are using funds meant to operate the program to begin the process of shutting it down.

- It doesn't have to be this way. CHIP is a bipartisan success story. The program was created in 1997 and has been championed by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle since its very beginning.
- Nearly 9 million children across the country are enrolled in the program. CHIP stands on the shoulders of Medicaid to cover children in working families who are not eligible for Medicaid and lack access to affordable private coverage.
- The program is designed around what children need. It offers benefits that are age-appropriate, including dental coverage and mental health and substance abuse services, which may not be covered by a family's employer-sponsored insurance.
- CHIP plans include networks of pediatricians, pediatric medical and surgical subspecialists, and children's hospitals, which are especially critical for children with special health care needs.
- **Please take immediate action to extend current CHIP funding for five years.** We cannot leave our children and families to face an uncertain future any longer.
- Thank you for all you do for children.

Email form letter

The latest email form letter can be found on federaladvocacy.aap.org under the Advocacy Action Center by clicking on "[Extend CHIP Funding for Five Years Without Delay](#)." There, you will be directly connected to your federal legislators. The text is also below:

Subject: Extend CHIP funding for Five Years Without Delay

As a pediatrician and a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am urging you to pass legislation that would extend current funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years and maintain the bipartisan history of the program.

CHIP funding expired about two months ago. It should not take children losing their health insurance for Congress to act. Real children and families are facing the implications and the ongoing uncertainty about whether or not they will be able to access the health care they rely on.

Because CHIP funding has not been extended, states have been forced to make difficult choices as they question the future of their CHIP programs. Actions range from slashing enrollment and reducing benefits to imposing higher costs for families, to potentially eliminating CHIP altogether. Already several states are using funds meant to operate the program to begin the process of shutting it down.

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Please take immediate action to extend current CHIP funding for five years. We cannot leave our children and families to face an uncertain future any longer.

Thank you for all you do for children.

Other Helpful Resources

- An [article](#) from the Daily Beast, “Congress Created a Health-Care Crisis for Kids Right in Time for the Holidays”
- An [article](#) from The Atlantic, “The Damage to Children's Health Insurance Is Already Being Done”
- A [piece](#) from the Village Voice on a New York family that relies on CHIP
- An [op-ed](#) from the St. Louis Post Dispatch, “Congress uses kids' lives as bargaining chips”
- A [piece](#) from NBC News, "Millions of kids may lose health insurance over missed deadline by Congress
- An [infographic](#) from the National Academy for State Health Policy, “State Checklist for Shutting Down CHIP Programs”
- AAP’s [statement](#) on the House CHIP bill
- A [report](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation, “Current Status of State Planning for the Future of CHIP”
- A [fact sheet](#), “Children’s Health Insurance Program: Setting the Record Straight”
- A [statement](#) from the National Governors Association on CHIP extension