



Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association

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Sister Clare Christi Schiefer, OSF
President

TO: Members, Pennsylvania Senate

FROM: Sister Clare Christi Schiefer, OSF

DATE: June 12, 2013

SUBJECT: **Support for House Bill 108
(Extension of Children's Health
Insurance Program (CHIP) through 2015)**

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association (PCHA) and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC), I write in support of House Bill 108 that extends the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through 2015. PCHA is a statewide organization that represents the Catholic health ministry in public policy matters and is closely aligned with PCC, the public affairs arm of the Catholic bishops in Pennsylvania.

PCHA and PCC have been involved in advocacy efforts for health care coverage of children since 1992 when Pennsylvania created the Children's Health Insurance Program. Subsequently, that program became a model nationwide. As a result of the federal S-CHIP and Pennsylvania's efforts to provide health care insurance, approximately 188,000 of the Commonwealth's children are covered by CHIP. If it is not reauthorized, CHIP will expire on December 31, 2013. CHIP is critical so that children continue to have access to vital health care services they would not otherwise be able to afford. Extension of CHIP through House Bill 108 will also allow the state to continue to draw down federal funding for the program.

Pennsylvania's children deserve to lead healthy, successful lives. Insurance coverage is essential for families to get appropriate and necessary health care for their children. During this time of economic downturn, it is more important than ever that Pennsylvania continues to offer health care insurance to children in need of coverage and care. The impact is plain and simple – having insurance improves health outcomes of children. Furthermore, children who have health insurance generally have a relationship with a primary care physician. And, families with coverage are less likely to use costly emergency room services for common childhood ailments. Health care coverage is strongly linked to academic success as well.

It is important not to reverse the progress that Pennsylvania has made through state and federal partnerships for children's health insurance. **Therefore, PCHA and PCC urge you to support the reauthorization of CHIP through 2015, as provided by House Bill 108 to**

An Associate of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference

ensure that Pennsylvania's children will have access to health care coverage through this critical safety-net program.

Thank you for your attention.

cc: The Honorable Nicolas Micozzie
PCHA Board of Directors
Richard E. Connell, Esq.
Dr. Robert J. O'Hara, Jr.
Ms. Amy B. Hill
Ms. Joelle Shea



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The Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association (PCHA) is a statewide organization whose membership is comprised of Catholic hospitals, long-term care facilities, numerous multi-facility health systems and other related health care entities, sponsoring religious congregations and dioceses. PCHA provides support for the Catholic health ministry through Gospel witness in advocacy, communication, education and united action.