



## JOINT ADVOCACY ALERT

### **Contact Your Senators Immediately Ask Them to Support Dental Health Provisions in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization**

On July 19, in a strong show of bipartisanship, the Senate Finance Committee voted 17 to 4 to approve the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Reauthorization Act. The \$35 billion legislation would maintain coverage for 6.6 million children and provide 3.3 million low-income, uninsured American children with access to health care. The Finance bill doubles SCHIP federal funding from \$25 billion to \$60 billion over five years. It does so through taxes on all tobacco products, including an increase from 39 cents to \$1 per pack on the federal cigarette tax.

**The Senate's bipartisan SCHIP reauthorization includes \$200 million in new federal funding for states to enhance and expand dental coverage for children.** This new funding would be distributed through dental health grants to states. States that receive the dental health grants must maintain current levels of dental funding in addition to the new funding that must be used to improve accessibility and strengthen dental coverage for children.

Crafted by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus and Ranking Minority Member Charles Grassley (R-IA) with two senior members of the Committee [Senators John Rockefeller (D-WV) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT)], the bill represents a policy and political compromise. While it does not achieve everything dental and children's advocates had hoped, it is the only bi-partisan vehicle likely to garner sufficient support in the Senate to override President Bush's threatened veto.

**The SCHIP reauthorization bill may be on the floor of the Senate this week (July 23-27). The Senate's goal is to finish work on the bill before the August recess (Friday, August 3).** The House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committees will mark up their SCHIP bills in a massive \$90 billion SCHIP-Medicare-Sustainable Growth Rate package this week which is expected to be more generous than the Senate. Oral health advocates are still hoping for a dental benefit guarantee in the House version. Even so, oral health advocates are urged to support the Senate SCHIP compromise and continue to press Congress for a strong dental provision in SCHIP.

Oral health advocates should call their Senators immediately with the following message:

#### **ADVOCACY MESSAGE:**

- 1) Please support bipartisan SCHIP legislation adopted by the Senate Finance Committee which includes \$200 million in additional funding for state improvements and expansions in dental coverage to children.
- 2) Should an amendment on the floor be offered that would strengthen the Senate bill by including a guarantee of critical dental health coverage for all children in SCHIP, please vote "yes" for this amendment.

All eleven Democrats and six Republicans on the Finance Committee voted for the bi-partisan SCHIP bill. **It is important that oral health advocates residing in the states of the Senators who voted to support the bill thank them for their support.**

If your member is among those listed below who voted to endorse the SCHIP bill, please contact him/her and say "thank you:"

**THANK YOU MESSAGE FOR FINANCE MEMBERS SUPPORTING CHIP:**

- 1) Thank you for supporting CHIP reauthorization in the Senate Finance Committee. I am pleased with the addition of \$200 million that will fund enhancements in dental health benefits for children enrolled in SCHIP.
- 2) Although the CHIP bill does not provide a guarantee of critical dental health coverage to children enrolled in SCHIP, it is an important first-step toward a stronger Federal commitment to children's dental health within the program."

Use the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to your Senators or go <http://www.senate.gov/> and enter your zip code, follow the links to your Senators' contact information. Please contact Myla Moss (202) 289-7201, [mossm@adea.org](mailto:mossm@adea.org) or Daryl Pritchard (703)-589-0489, [dpritchard@iadr.org](mailto:dpritchard@iadr.org) to let them know the results of your call.

**Finance Committee Members  
Who Voted To Support SCHIP Reauthorization**

Max Baucus, (D-Montana-CHAIRMAN)  
Charles Grassley (R-Iowa-RANKING MINORITY MEMBER)  
Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico)  
Maria Cantwell (D-Washington)  
Kent Conrad (D-North Dakota)  
Mike Crapo (R-Idaho)  
Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah)  
John F. Kerry (D-Massachusetts)  
Blanche L. Lincoln (D-Arkansas)  
Pat Roberts (R-Kansas)  
John D. Rockefeller IV, (D-West Virginia)  
Ken Salazar (D-Colorado)  
Charles E. Schumer (D-New York)  
Gordon Smith (R-Oregon)  
Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine)  
Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan)  
Ron Wyden (D-Oregon)