



HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES
Coalition of Georgia

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia, Inc.

Legislative Alert House Bill 340 3/23/07

******* Action Needed*******

Monday morning, the Georgia House Health & Human Services Committee Passed out Speaker Richardson's House Bill 340 cutting PeachCare eligibility and benefits. Minutes before the Speaker took the podium to explain his bill a substitute was distributed. Debate on this new version was limited to one question per committee member. Those who testified on the bill received one minute apiece to voice their concerns.

The new version of HB 340 will:

- Reduce the PeachCare eligibility threshold to 200% of the federal poverty limit,
- Allow the DCH Board to drop the eligibility threshold as low as 185% of the federal poverty level or raise it to 225% of the federal poverty level despite the fact that indications are Congress may well raise the income limit
- Reduce benefits to "substantially the same benefits" dependents of State employees receive through their plan
- Allow DCH to eliminate vision and dental options or charge additional premiums for these services under the theory that benefits are "too rich"

and

HB 340 is in the House Rules Committee and it has been scheduled for a vote on the House floor on Tuesday, March 27 (the 30th Legislative Day).

Our voices are needed now, more than ever to ensure that legislators vote against cuts to PeachCare benefits and eligibility and "no" on House Bill 340. We believe that:

** All children deserve health care coverage and that PeachCare provides an essential health safety net for children in lower income families who cannot afford or do not have access to private or employer provided health insurance;*

** PeachCare benefits are not "too rich." They are tailored to the needs of children. Dental and vision coverage are standard SCHIP benefits throughout the nation because they are health services that kids need;*

** PeachCare is not an entitlement. Parents of children in the PeachCare program pay taxes and pay a premium for their children's PeachCare coverage;*

** Congress is likely to add funding for the SCHIP program. We do NOT expect that they will limit eligibility for children.*

What can you do?

Please contact the your State Representative (House member) and ask them to vote "No" on House Bill 340!

You can find your representative's contact information at

<http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2007_08/house/07alpha.html>
http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/2007_08/house/07alpha.html