



CHILDREN NOW



PICO California
Unlocking the Power of People



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Governor's May Revision Misses the Mark

Does not improve children's access to health care or restore cuts to successful prevention programs

On behalf of a coalition of leading children's health advocates in California, Wendy Lazarus, Founder and Co-President of The Children's Partnership issued the following statement in response to Governor Brown's 2014-15 May Revision of his budget proposal:

"We are pleased that the Governor's May Revision reflects the continued success of the state's expansion of Medi-Cal coverage to more children and families. However, the Governor's revised budget misses a golden opportunity to build a healthier California by restoring cuts to children's health programs. In the ongoing budget discussions over the next month, we urge the Governor and state Legislature to prioritize California's poor and vulnerable children by restoring funding for proven prevention programs for children. In addition, as the Governor expands access to health coverage through Medi-Cal, he and the Legislature must also take the budget actions to ensure there are enough doctors and dentists in Medi-Cal to provide the needed care for children and families.

We are disappointed that the Governor's revised budget fails to restore critical, effective public health prevention programs for children that were eliminated during the recession. These include programs to serve high-risk infants and provide preventive dental and mental health services, such as the Black Infant Health Program, California Children's Dental Disease Prevention

Program, and Early Mental Health Initiative. Given the state's \$2.4 billion increase in revenues, we urge the Legislature and Governor to reinvest in children's health by reinstating these cost-effective and successful programs.

Prevention and early intervention in children's health can improve the health of California's children, families and communities, and save money by reducing long-term health care and other costs to taxpayers. The budget also fails to fund behavioral therapy for children with autism in Medi-Cal, despite the fact that all other children in the state have access to this standard-of-care treatment.

The substantial increase in enrollment in Medi-Cal is encouraging news. However, California must do the hard work of ensuring there are enough doctors, dentists and providers to serve all children and families in Medi-Cal. California's Medi-Cal provider payments are already among the lowest in the country. By failing to restore a 10 percent cut to Medi-Cal payments, the Governor's revised budget undermines access to care for children. Continuing cuts to Medi-Cal providers passed during the recession will irresponsibly put the health of half of California's children at risk by making it prohibitively burdensome for children and families to get the care they need.

We are encouraged that Governor Brown's revised budget continues to recognize the importance of children's access to health services by proposing \$2 million for a new pilot program in Los Angeles to increase utilization of children's vision services. We hope the Governor will work with children's health stakeholders to develop a replicable, high-impact pilot program, and also implement other efforts to improve outreach and access to critical children's health services, including dental."

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Children Now

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The Children's Partnership (TCP) is a national, nonprofit child advocacy organization working to ensure that all children - especially those at risk of being left behind - have the resources and the opportunities they need to grow up healthy and to lead productive lives. TCP focuses particular attention on securing health coverage for uninsured children and ensuring that the opportunities of digital technology benefit all children and families.

www.childrenpartnership.org

Children Now is a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization working to raise children's well-being to the top of the state and national policy agenda. Children Now focuses on ensuring quality health care, a solid education and a positive media environment for all children.

www.childrennow.org

Children's Defense Fund-California (CDF-CA) is the California office of the Children's Defense Fund, a non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for 35 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. The Children's Defense Fund champions policies and programs that lift children out of poverty, protect them from abuse and neglect, and ensure their access to health care, a quality education, and a moral and spiritual foundation.

www.cdfca.org

PICO California is the state's largest community organizing network. We organize in 73 cities, 35 school districts, and in more than one-half of the state's Senate and Assembly districts. PICO California was established in 1994, bringing together local federations from throughout California to affect meaningful budget and policy change at the state level. Over the past 20 years, our organizing and policy advocacy has resulted in increased investments in education and healthcare, and in programs and services that are critical for working families. Together, we represent 480 congregations and 450,000 families of diverse economic, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds committed to advancing racial and economic justice in California through organizing, advocacy, and voter engagement.

www.picocalifornia.org

California Coverage & Health Initiatives (CCHI), a leader in health advocacy for children and families, is a statewide association of outreach and enrollment organizations that are focused on helping children and families navigate into affordable health coverage and have access to high quality health care and other services. With firsthand experience and success enrolling children into public programs, such as Medi-Cal, as well as administering local Healthy Kids programs, the members of CCHI have shown that coverage for all children in California is a reachable goal.

www.cchi4families.org

United Ways of California (UWCA) is the state association for California's local United Ways. UWCA works to improve the health, education and financial stability for low-income children and families by enhancing and coordinating the advocacy and community impact work of California's United Ways. UWCA is a strong advocate of expanding health coverage to all

California children and their families. United Ways work closely with local community and business leaders, state and federal legislators, and volunteers to promote this achievable and important goal. www.unitedwaysca.org.