

# THE CHIPP ACT: SECURING HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR AMERICA'S KIDS

SUPPORT H.R. 4771 (SPONSOR: REP. BARRAGÁN)  
DURING THE 118TH CONGRESS



Every child should have access to stable, affordable, and quality health care coverage. For seven million children in the U.S., the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides access to coverage so they can get the physical and behavioral health services to meet their unique needs. CHIP covers children from working families that make too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to purchase private insurance. CHIP has been a leading contributor in reducing the uninsurance rate among children, which has fallen more than 60% since CHIP's enactment in 1997, from nearly 15% to 5.4%. Despite CHIP's demonstrated success, the program's funding is not permanent.

**60%**  
CHIP has helped reduce  
child uninsured rate by  
over 60% since 1997.

Representative Barragán's Children's Health Insurance Program Permanency (CHIPP) Act (H.R. 4771) rectifies the inequities surrounding CHIP's financing and secures health care coverage for millions of children by making CHIP permanent. In addition to making CHIP permanent, the CHIPP Act would:

- **Protect Program Quality** - The CHIPP Act continues CHIP's legacy of providing quality coverage by permanently extending the Pediatric Quality Measures Program (PQMP), a set of quality metrics aimed at improving outcomes for children enrolled in CHIP and Medicaid.
- **Continue Resources and Options for States to Reach Eligible Families** - Of the 4 million uninsured children in the U.S., approximately 2.5 million are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP. The CHIPP Act permanently extends grant resources for states to conduct outreach and enrollment, including targeting hard-to-reach populations. Additionally, the CHIPP Act permanently extends the Express Lane Eligibility (ELE) option, which allows states to use eligibility data from other programs (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)) to streamline eligibility determinations and get kids connected to health care coverage.
- **Strengthen State Flexibility** - A hallmark of CHIP is its flexibility allowing states to determine program design and eligibility so long as federal guardrails are met. Currently, however, states must submit a waiver to expand their CHIP income eligibility levels. The CHIPP Act would reduce state administrative burden and improve flexibility by allowing states to increase CHIP eligibility levels via a plan amendment rather than the sometimes burdensome waiver process.
- **Avoid a CHIP Funding Cliff** - The CHIP funding baseline is critical for extending the program. To calculate the baseline for programs like CHIP in the out-years, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) uses the final year of spending for the program to project future funding levels. Due to accounting gimmicks in past CHIP extensions, the out-year baseline in FY 2029 that CBO will use to project future costs will be inadequate to fund the true costs of the program going forward. It is critical to not delay making CHIP funding permanent to avoid this fiscal cliff in the out-years, which would threaten the future of the program.

Please reach out to Vice President of Medicaid and Child Health Policy, **Abuko D. Estrada, J.D.** ([abukoe@firstfocus.org](mailto:abukoe@firstfocus.org)) and Director of Health, Environmental, and Nutritional Policy, **Abbie Malloy** ([abbiem@firstfocus.org](mailto:abbiem@firstfocus.org)) with questions.