



September 6, 2006

Maternal and Child Health Access

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**Please Ask The Governor
TO SIGN AB 1948 (Montañez-Figueroa)
To Improve the CHDP Gateway
for Child Health Enrollments.**

Thanks to all of your efforts, AB 1948 (Montañez-Figueroa) is on its way to the Governor's desk. Our task now is to get his signature by the September 30 deadline.

AB 1948 would require State DHS to conduct a Feasibility Study Review (FSR) of the technological changes needed to improve the CHDP Gateway to allow families to use a single application form to both start a child's temporary coverage *and* count as the follow up application. **With this simple change, the child's temporary coverage would continue until the final eligibility determination is made.** Under new state law provisions adopted in 2002, the FSR is now the first mandatory step for certain computer upgrades at State DHS.

The improvements to the CHDP Gateway enrollment process proposed by AB 1948 would result in approximately **173,000 eligible uninsured kids getting Medi-Cal or Healthy Families each year**—that's about 40% of California's 429,000 eligible but uninsured children (2003 UCLA data).

In addition, the state would **save \$834,000 a year in administrative costs** by eliminating duplication in the application process—that's almost a \$1 million a year that could be spent on providing health care instead.

A sample letter to the Governor (copies to Assemblymember Montañez and Senator Figueroa) is below. **Please write soon.**

Thank you for your support!!

[YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax No. (916) 445-4633

Re: AB 1948 (Montañez-Figueroa): SUPPORT

Dear Governor:

[BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S INTEREST IN CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE.]

We urge you to sign AB 1948.

➤ **Background**

California's two main children's health insurance programs, Medi-Cal and Healthy Families, are a vital source of protection for low-income children. Many of the 429,000 eligible but not enrolled children (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2003 data) could benefit from these programs if the state simply removed bureaucratic barriers to enrollment.

One such barrier is the "two-step" design of the state's current Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Gateway process. Currently, children up to age 18 in families with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level can immediately enroll for coverage over the Internet from a doctor's office or clinic at the time of a "well-child" visit. However, the child will automatically lose coverage in a maximum of two months if the family does not submit a Medi-Cal/Healthy Families paper application before the child's temporary coverage expires.

➤ **AB 1948**

AB 1948 requires the State Department of Health Services (DHS) to prepare, by March 1, 2008, a Feasibility Study Review (FSR) of the technological requirements for condensing the current "two-step" application process for the CHDP Gateway into one simple application for families wishing to enroll their children in on-going coverage. Under this approach, eligible children could enroll into Medi-Cal and Healthy Families at the provider's office and maintain coverage until a final eligibility determination is made.

➤ **Why AB 1948 is necessary**

- **An FSR is now the mandatory start** for making information technology changes at DHS, including the necessary improvements to the CHDP Gateway.
- Children with health insurance are more likely to **be healthy and stay in school** and to **avoid the need for costly emergency and other** treatments for conditions that worsen without timely access to preventative and other basic medical care.

- DHS has estimated that **173,000 children each year** would be enrolled in Medi-Cal or Healthy Families as a result of a similar measure (AB 624, vetoed in 2005)—that’s **40% of the 429,000 children who are eligible but not enrolled** (UCLA Feb 2005).
- DHS also estimates that eliminating the duplicative activities associated with the current “two-step” Gateway enrollment process would save **\$840,000 a year in admin costs**.

Please sign AB 1948. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[POSITION]

cc: Assemblymember Cindy Moñtanez (Fax No. (916) 319-2139)
Senator Liz Figueroa (Fax No. (916) 327-2433)