Medicaid and CHIP: Essential Investments in Children

- Medicaid is the most important health care program for children in America. Over 30 million children receive health care via this program.

- Medicaid provides for essential child-specific benefits, such as Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT), that must be protected if children are to receive the care they require.

- Medicaid plays a critical role in improving health outcomes for children. Children covered by Medicaid, compared to those who are uninsured, go on to enjoy better health, lower rates of mortality and higher educational and economic outcomes as they become adults.

- Medicaid is challenged by low payment rates and barriers to interstate care limiting access, which must be improved and not made worse.

- CHIP is a separate essential program for children that must be reauthorized in 2017. CHIP covers several million additional children who don’t qualify for Medicaid.

- The rate of uninsured children today is at a record low thanks in large part to Medicaid and CHIP.

- Medicaid and CHIP together are an effective investment in our national security, covering the children who will become the future of our nation’s economic, community and military leadership for a cost of less than 10 percent of total public health care spending.

- In any outcome where Medicaid is simply cut across-the-board, children lose disproportionately. Fundamental changes to the financing or structure of the program, such as capping federal support for Medicaid, can undermine coverage and access to care. While Medicaid is administered by the states, over 60 percent of program funding is provided by the federal government.

- As Congress considers Medicaid and CHIP proposals, it is imperative that coverage and access for children are not jeopardized. Any potential reforms must be evaluated on this standard: How do we best consider and protect our nation’s children?