



June 21, 2005

Representative Pete Stark
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Stark:

On behalf of Families USA, the national consumer health organization, I am writing to congratulate you on the introduction of the "MediKids Health Insurance Act of 2005." This important legislation will help keep the nation's attention focused on the continued problem of the uninsured, and represents a true step toward universal coverage for all of our children.

As you well know, 45 million Americans lack health insurance, almost 9 million of whom are children. People who do not have health insurance often delay or forgo needed medical care; as a result, they become sicker or need more expensive care. Health care bills are a leading cause of family bankruptcies, and yet more than eight of 10 of those who lack insurance are in working families.

Thank you for your continued work and dedication on this very important legislation and we look forward to working with you on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Ronald F. Pollack
Executive Director



Office of Government Affairs
1146 19th St. NW, Sixth Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone (202) 659-1800
Fax (202) 296-2964

June 22, 2005

The Honorable Fortney "Pete" Stark
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Stark:

On behalf of 3 million volunteers and 1400 staff members of the March of Dimes, I want to extend our endorsement of the "Medikids Health Insurance Act of 2005." Providing access to comprehensive health coverage for every uninsured or underinsured child in America is a key March of Dimes policy priority as we carry out our mission to ensure that children are born healthy and stay healthy.

According to the most recent Census Data, there were over 9.1 million uninsured children in the United States in 2003, despite the availability of public safety net programs. The Institute of Medicine has found that health insurance status is the single most important influence in determining whether health care is accessible to children when they need it. Without insurance, children are almost twice as likely as an insured child to go without well-child care and preventive services, such as immunizations, that are essential in avoiding more serious, long-term health problems. As a result, they are more likely to require inpatient emergency care to treat serious conditions that could have been averted through timely treatment.

The MediKids proposal builds on the current mixed system of public and private coverage by ensuring that no child will slip through the cracks of the health care system. It automatically covers children if their insurance lapses, follows children if their families move, and helps families climbing out of poverty who become ineligible for means-tested programs.

We are also encouraged that the benefit package is based on Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program for children, with modest cost sharing for those with higher incomes and comprehensive prescription drug coverage. The March of Dimes understands how important the EPSDT entitlement to specialty care services can be to a child with serious and chronic medical needs.

The March of Dimes greatly appreciates your many contributions to improving access to health coverage for children and their families. Thank you for your vision and leadership in crafting the "Medikids Health Insurance Act of 2005." Volunteers and staff of the March of Dimes stand ready to assist in your efforts to make meaningful and affordable health coverage available for every child.

Sincerely,

Dr. Marina L. Weiss
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Affairs



**National Association of
Community Health Centers, Inc.**

June 21, 2005

The Honorable Fortney "Pete" Stark
United States House of Representatives
239 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
United States Senate
531 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressman Stark and Senator Rockefeller:

On behalf of America's community, migrant, homeless, and public housing health centers and the 15 million patients they serve nationwide, we applaud you for the bold health care vision you have outlined in your newest legislative proposal, the "MediKids Health Insurance Act of 2005."

Health centers are among the backbone of the nation's health care safety net for children. In 2003, health centers served over 7 million children age 23 and below and 4.7 million age 19 and under (one of every five low-income children in America), 1.6 million of whom are uninsured. From their direct experience, health centers can readily attest to the need for a health insurance program that will ensure no child falls into the cracks that currently exist between and among private and public health coverage options.

The "MediKids" legislation would be particularly important to the more than 700,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers served at health centers, nearly half of whom are children. Although nearly all children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP coverage, almost three-fourths of them remain completely uninsured. Significant barriers prevent many children of farmworker families from enrolling in the public health insurance programs for which they are eligible.

Perhaps even more disturbing, for those farmworker families who are enrolled, their Medicaid and SCHIP plans are not portable across state lines. Farmworker families are by definition a mobile population that follows agricultural employment opportunities along a seasonal migrant stream that takes them from one state to another throughout the year. Any public health insurance program that is administered solely by the States does not fit the needs of this vulnerable population. The "MediKids" program would solve this problem for migrant and seasonal farmworker children and other similarly mobile populations by creating a fully portable Federally administered health insurance program for low-income and uninsured families.

We also appreciate those sections of your legislation that acknowledge the importance of health centers as outstationed eligibility sites and that expand presumptive eligibility options for enrollment onto the "MediKids" program.

For these reasons and others, the National Association of Community Health Centers is proud to give its whole-hearted endorsement and offer its fullest support for the “MediKids Health Insurance Act of 2005.” We stand ready to assist you in any way possible to help make this legislative proposal a policy reality for the millions of children in this country who need the security in coverage it promises.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Beth Thompson, our Assistant Director of Federal Affairs, if there is any way we can contribute to your worthy efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel R. Hawkins, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Daniel R. Hawkins, Jr.
Vice President for Federal, State, and Public Affairs



Publisher of Consumer Reports

June 21, 2005

The Honorable Fortney (Pete) Stark
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Stark:

Congratulations to you and Senator Rockefeller on the introduction of MediKids, legislation which would guarantee quality health care for every American child.

Consumers Union, the publisher of *Consumer Reports*, strongly endorses your legislation, which uses the principles of Medicare to ensure that every child born in America has health insurance at least as comprehensive as Medicare. There can be no more pressing consumer issue for a mother or father than access to health care for their children. Despite major efforts to cover children through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), funding limits on that program and constant changes in the state Medicaid programs have meant that millions of lower income children are still uninsured. Your legislation would guarantee coverage of 100 percent of the nation's children—and that would mean a healthier America in the years to come.

We appreciate the provisions in the bill which provide catastrophic out-of-pocket protection for families and that would ensure a quality prescription drug program. Any family which has health insurance equal to or better than the adjusted Medicare package of benefits would, of course, be able to keep that coverage and would not be required to join MediKids. But any family that, for whatever reason, loses private coverage or is temporarily

Washington Office


1666 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 310 • Washington, D.C. 20009
(202) 462-6262 • fax (202) 265-9548 • www.consumersunion.org

unable to afford their current coverage will know that their children will always have access to quality health insurance through MediKids.

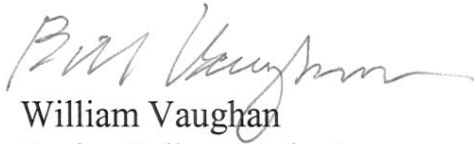
Guaranteeing health care coverage to all babies and children is a necessary step to address the problem of the uninsured. It is long overdue.

We look forward to working with you on the enactment of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail Shearer".

Gail Shearer
Director, Health Policy Analysis

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Vaughan".

William Vaughan
Senior Policy Analyst