



For Immediate Release
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**SENATORS SECURE EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH
IN SUPPLEMENTAL SPENDING LEGISLATION**

*Appropriations Committee authorizes funds necessary to cover CHIP shortfalls
and ensure that states will not cut children from health coverage this year*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Health Subcommittee Chairman John D. Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) have secured authorization for emergency funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in a pending supplemental spending bill. Currently, as many as 14 states expect to run out of the Federal money they need to provide CHIP coverage and health care to kids in the coming months. At the Senators' urging, the Senate Appropriations Committee today approved funding to ensure that states will not be forced to cut children from CHIP this year due to Federal funding shortfalls.

"Financial shortfalls for the Children's Health Insurance Program meet the textbook definition of an emergency. It would be a dire emergency for families all across this country if a lack of Federal funds kicked their kids out of health coverage and into medical danger," said Baucus. **"Congress must provide the funds to fill in the holes this year, and then renew CHIP in a way that strengthens states' ability to keep kids covered."**

"CHIP is not a Democratic program or a Republican program. It is an American program that has enjoyed broad bipartisan support among Senators and Governors alike," said Rockefeller. **"As we turn our attention to CHIP reauthorization, we must commit ourselves to reaching all eligible uninsured children, retaining state flexibility, and providing funding stability from year-to-year."**

The Congressional Research Service estimates that Federal shortfalls in CHIP funding may total nearly \$750 million this year. However, the Congressional Budget Office says that by the time Medicaid picks up coverage for a number of children, the cost of emergency CHIP funding could be reduced to \$450 million. Baucus said today that as the emergency supplemental bill must still move to the full Senate and then be negotiated with the House, there may be a need to move stand-alone legislation to cover CHIP shortfalls before states are forced to cut coverage.

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The Children's Health Insurance Program currently provides health coverage to 6.6 million American children. About six million more children are eligible for health coverage through public health programs such as CHIP, but are not enrolled. The program expires on September 30, 2007, and must be renewed by that time. The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over the CHIP program, and he has made its renewal and expansion the Committee's number-one health priority this year.

“I want to thank Senator Byrd and the Appropriations Committee for incorporating language from the Keep Children Covered Act (S. 401) in the emergency supplemental,” Rockefeller said. **“This legislation will provide peace of mind for families in 14 states who currently face the possibility of losing vital health insurance coverage for their children.”**

“Kids should be at the top of the list when it comes to expanding health coverage,” said Baucus. **“Senator Byrd and the Appropriations Committee have done a good thing for children by approving this funding. The Finance Committee has a responsibility and an opportunity to reach millions more kids this year through the Children's Health Insurance Program, and we will work together in a bipartisan way to get it done.”**

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