A statement on The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

The delay in extending CHIP undermines the fundamental tenet of healthcare as human beings caring for human beings.

The Patient Experience Policy Forum, a coalition of healthcare organizations and patients focused on ensuring strong and positive patient and family experience in healthcare as well as policy that supports that, believes a fundamental element of patient experience includes access to care itself. Accordingly, the Forum is deeply concerned that the future of CHIP hangs in the balance.

CHIP extension has now been delayed since September 2017. It appears to have fallen victim to the current political climate in Washington, despite strong public support and bipartisan agreement on its value. This delay in action disregards the lives of nine million children in need of basic services and harms the most vulnerable among us.

With federal funding depleting at rapid rates in states across the country, some reportedly running out of money as of this past Friday, January 19, the inaction of Congress represents a lack of consciousness of the true consequences of this delay even with a clear and shared expression of this program’s value. While CHIP is apparently being used as a lever for other desired legislative outcomes, the fate of children is at stake.

A bipartisan agreement to extend CHIP more than simply provides coverage. It addresses the financial burdens that could ultimately deter people from care. Thus, placing even greater strains on our nation’s communities and health systems. The most recent CBO scoring shows, based on projected increases in general marketplace coverage with recent policy changes, continued funding of CHIP will save money over time while ensuring access to care for millions of people, reducing its price tag from $8.2 billion over a 5-year extension to just $800 million over a ten-year period.

If the reason for delays was disagreement in funding, that argument has now been diminished and the bipartisan commitment to this critical program should once again return to the program’s original purpose to provide needed coverage and access to care.

The PX Policy Forum calls on Congress to come to a bipartisan agreement that will sustain this critical program and support the stability of the care system for children, families and the states that serve them. Action will alleviate confusion, eliminate fear and reinforce a commitment to the health of our nation’s children. This is fundamental to the human experience in healthcare, to provide people access to the care they need. Congress can and must ensure this happens.

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