

January 5, 2007

The Honorable Fortney H (Pete) Stark  
Chair, Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Stark:

On behalf of Consumers Union, the independent, non-profit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, we are writing in support of your continued efforts to enact legislation that will provide all children in this nation with health insurance. "The MediKids Health Insurance Act of 2007" would guarantee that all children in this country will soon have health insurance and thus better access to dependable health care. Your bill would end the national disgrace of nine million children (a number equal to the total population of the State of Georgia) without reliable access to health care.

Some of the strengths of the MediKids Act are: enrollment would be automatic (unless parents opt to get equivalent or more extensive coverage from another public or private health insurance program); benefits would be comprehensive, including prescription drugs and the Medicaid EPSDT benefits; families up to 150 percent of poverty would be fully subsidized.

This legislation eliminates the gaps in coverage that exist in our current patchwork health care system. It assures that children will have seamless coverage regardless of their parents' employment status, income, or state of residence.

As in any major new initiative, there are questions that need to be explored through hearings and refinements to the final legislation. For example, how do we ensure that MediKids and Medicaid/S-CHIP work in a complementary, smooth fashion? How will the program be fairly financed without overly burdening the working low-income and those just over the 150 percent of poverty threshold? And how do we ensure that existing programs like Medicaid are adequately funded so that providers are willing to see low-income patients.

We look forward to working with you to enact legislation that protects all children, and we truly appreciate your continuing commitment to making quality, affordable health care available to all.

Sincerely,

Gail Shearer  
Director, Health Policy Analysis

William Vaughan  
Senior Policy Analyst