

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted last night with the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), legislation which would provide health care to over 10 million children nationwide, including 396,042 children currently enrolled in New York's SCHIP program (CHPlus), and extend coverage to an additional 268,000 eligible New York children who are not enrolled.

"It is unacceptable that in the richest country in the world there are children, many from working families, who go without medicine, without treatment, and without health care at all," **said Arcuri**

"As a father, I know the worry parents face when a child gets sick and how critical health insurance is to ensure preventative care. The House has reauthorized the SCHIP program, maintaining health care coverage for nearly 19,000 children in the 24th district and improving states' ability to cover millions of eligible children nationwide. Providing quality health care to millions of children is an investment in our future. I strongly urge the President to sign this bill into law and stop standing in the way of health care for our children."

This bipartisan bill, H.R.976, is an agreement between the Senate and House to reauthorize SCHIP for \$35 billion over the next five years. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, H.R.976 would provide health care coverage for more than 10 million children – preserving coverage for the 6.6 million currently covered by SCHIP and extending coverage to 3.8 million children who are currently eligible for coverage but remain uninsured. It establishes a new quality child health initiative to develop and implement quality measures and improve state reporting of data.

In addition, the bill provides for quality dental coverage for all children enrolled in SCHIP and ensures states will offer mental health services on par with medical and surgical benefits covered under SCHIP. It includes \$100 million in grants for new outreach activities to states, local governments, schools, community-based organizations, safety-net providers and others.

SCHIP provides health coverage to American children whose parents do not qualify for Medicaid, but can't afford private insurance. Two-thirds of uninsured children are currently eligible for SCHIP or Medicaid. This bill is designed to give states the resources and incentives to enroll children who are eligible but not signed up for SCHIP and Medicaid. It costs less than \$3.50 a day to cover a child through SCHIP.

Earlier this month, Arcuri joined other New York representatives in sending a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) requesting that the Agency rescind unfair requirements imposed on states like New York who sought to extend health insurance to moderate-income families, and that they approve New York State's pending Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) expansion waiver. Arcuri denounced HHS's decision to reject the State of New York's application to provide health insurance for additional uninsured children in New York.

The bill passed last evening replaces the Administration's unrealistic guidelines with a more appropriate approach by phasing in a new requirement for coverage of low-income children as a condition of receiving CHIP funding for coverage of children above 300 percent of poverty.

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