



**Memorandum in Support
S.747 (Lugar)
The Children's Express Lane to Health Coverage Act**

The Children's Health Fund (CHF) supports S.747, the Children's Express Lane to Health Coverage Act of 2005. This bill would authorize states to base a child's eligibility for Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) on having met financial eligibility criteria for nutrition assistance or similar public programs and streamlines the enrollment process for Medicaid and SCHIP by removing some administrative barriers. Under current law, states are able to determine eligibility for the Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) based on the child's enrollment in Medicaid. A similar law should be enacted for Medicaid and SCHIP eligibility determination.

In New York State, where CHF supports one of its 17 national programs that provides health care to medically underserved children, 470,000 children are uninsured but eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP. Nationally, of the 9 million children who are uninsured, 6,900,000 are eligible for public health insurance coverage. Access to health insurance helps to facilitate access to a medical home.

CHF believes every child should receive health care in a medical home setting. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a medical home provides health care that is accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family-centered, coordinated, compassionate and culturally effective. A medical home links children with to medical specialists such as mental health and oral health services.

The Children's Health Fund, through its work with hospitals and health centers throughout the country, has provided comprehensive pediatric care to more than 300,000 medically underserved children since its inception in 1987. By providing a medical home to thousands of children through 17 programs in 13 states and the District of Columbia, CHF recognizes the importance of public health insurance programs to ensure continuity of care, the continuation of a child's access to a medical home.