



Testimony on the Children's Health Insurance Program

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The Texas Catholic Conference is the public policy voice of the 15 Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas. Through our ministries at Catholic Charities, Catholic hospitals and clinics throughout the state, and our practical parish experience serving the poor and middle class of Texas, we are concerned about the crisis of uninsured children in our state. We recognize that multiple bills have been filed to address declining numbers of use of the Children's Health Insurance Program.

The Roman Catholic Bishops of Texas support passage of legislation that will:

- Implement 12 months continuous eligibility for CHIP and Children's Medicaid
- Eliminate bureaucratic roadblocks to encourage personal responsibility and help low income families achieve self-sufficiency:
- Fix problems with the Integrated Eligibility System to prevent eligible kids from losing CHIP and Medicaid coverage
- Eliminate the CHIP asset test
- Eliminate the CHIP 90 day delay of coverage for uninsured children
- Deduct childcare and child support expenses when calculating income for CHIP.
- Provide adequate reimbursement for Medicaid and CHIP providers.
- Invest in outreach and education to ensure that all eligible children get the care that they need
- Ensure that the working poor who access both CHIP and Medicaid have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

Access to affordable, quality healthcare is a fundamental right for all children residing in Texas. We support efforts to ensure that all children are given the opportunity for a healthy start in life. Scripture teaches that God has a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. The Church calls on all of us to embrace this preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, to embody it in our lives, and to work to have it shape public policies and priorities. A fundamental measure of our society is how we care for and stand with the poor and vulnerable.