



ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

ALPHA RESOLUTION 1-2008

Increase in Denali KidCare Income Eligibility Level

Sponsor: Alaska Primary Care Association
Shelley Hughes

WHEREAS the Alaska Public Health Association strives toward the goal of a statewide healthy population, and because the provision of health insurance is a key component of that; and

WHEREAS the rate of uninsured children in Alaska is increasing: the 2007 uninsured rate for persons under 18 years of age was 11.4% compared to 10.3% in 2006 and 8.4% in 2005;¹ and

WHEREAS 21,000 children in Alaska did not have ongoing health care coverage in 2007² and approximately 18,470 children 17 years and younger in 2008 are currently uninsured in Alaska;³ and

WHEREAS approximately 8,000 Alaskan children 18 years or younger and below 200% of the FPL are uninsured,⁴ and 40,000 Alaskan children 19 years or younger and below 200% of the FPL rely on government health insurance to provide access to health care services;⁵ and

WHEREAS although the Denali KidCare upper income eligibility guideline was increased in 2007 to 175% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 46% of Alaska's children live at or below 200% FPL as compared to 40.6% nationwide and 39% in HRSA Region X; and

WHEREAS Alaska has seen a 31% decline in the number of children covered by private health insurance in the past decade;⁶ and

WHEREAS the cost of caring for uninsured children is passed on to other Alaskans and businesses, raising premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for everyone;⁷ and

WHEREAS uninsured children are 9 times less likely to have a regular doctor, 4 times more likely to be taken to emergency rooms, and 25% more likely to miss school than insured children;⁸ and

WHEREAS increasing Denali KidCare income eligibility levels to at least 200% above the FPL will increase health care access for children in families that meet this criteria; and

WHEREAS the aforementioned policy change would result in improved public health and overall health outcomes throughout the state for Alaskan children;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association supports the increase of the Denali KidCare income eligibility level to at least 200% above the FPL.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Public Health Association as an organization as well as individual Board Members and other Members will engage in low and no-cost advocacy efforts to promote Denali Kidcare income eligibility expansion such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Circulation of advocacy action requests to membership
- Circulation of advocacy action requests to partners and other individuals
- Posting of ALPHA resolutions on the Alaska Public Health Association’s website
- Participation in email advocacy campaigns
- Contact with policy makers via phone, letter, email and/or in-person meetings
- Public testimony in legislative hearings, town hall meetings, and other public forums
- Contribution of op-ed articles and/or letters to the editor
- Contributions to radio programs via calling-in or scheduled interviews
- Distribution of this resolution statement to policy makers and key officials.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact on ALPHA by the proposed resolution will be minimal. This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to the Governor and key political leaders.

Public Health Impact

This public health impact by the proposed resolution will be significant. This action will benefit public health by helping to increase the number of children

1. Who will be covered by and participate in the Denali KidCare program
2. Who will have ready access to health care services
3. Who will receive health care services

This action will also benefit public health by reducing the incidence of childhood diseases and improving overall health outcomes for Alaska’s children.

¹ “President’s Report,” Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association, September 12, 2008 .

² Ibid.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2006 through 2008.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2006 to 2008 Annual Social and Economic Supplements.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Legislative Health Care Initiatives Presentation to the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, August 27, 2007.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.