

PROPOSAL 2007- 6 (Emergency)

Establish SCHIP (State Child Health Insurance Program) Task Force to Support Expanded Nebraska “Kid’s Connection”

Subject:

Nebraska uninsured children

Proposed by:

Lynne Anderson RN, MSN, District II NNA

Contact Person:

Lynne Anderson (402-556-3786)

Type of Proposal:

New Action Proposal

Rationale:

There are currently approximately 30,000 children of working parents who do not have access to health insurance due to low income and employment by a business that does not offer affordable/any health insurance. Children who do not have health insurance are less likely to have access to preventative and maintenance health care. Episodic health care in an emergency setting is neither cost effective nor conducive to good health.

The State Children’s Health Insurance Program known as SCHIP was established in 1997 by Congress with bi-partisan support. SCHIP provides health insurance for children of working families who do not have access to health insurance through their employer or can not afford health insurance provided through their employer. The federal government pays 71% of the cost of the program. Each state sets up its own guidelines for eligibility and may include families who earn up to 400% of the federal poverty level, although the federal guidelines are being rewritten as this document is in preparation. Premiums for health insurance have soared as we are all painfully aware. Currently, Nebraska eligibility requirements cover children in families who earn 185% of poverty level. The Nebraska eligibility level was decreased from 200% to 185% in 2002 and re-application was changed from yearly to every 6 months. This is a huge burden for working people who may not be able to take time off from work to reapply. By increasing the inclusion criteria to 200%, about half of the uninsured children in Nebraska will qualify and even more will qualify at the 250% level.

Current supporters for the federal renewal and adequate funding of SCHIP includes ANA, AMA, American Hospital Association, AARP, National Education Association and a full three pages of like-minded national organizations

Interim study LR 202 is currently underway at the request of Dr. Joel Johnson, Senator and Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee. Information will be accepted from any interested individuals at that time.

Recommendations:

The Nebraska Nurses shall

1. Establish a Nebraska SCHIP task force
2. Provide supportive testimony for SCHIP related interim studies
3. Provide support testimony for legislative bills that may be introduced regarding expansion of SCHIP (Kids Connection) and legislation regarding increasing enrollment and retention in Kids Connection
4. Form alliances with other groups who support expansion of and inclusion of maximum number of children in SCHIP

Past House Actions:

None

Relation to Mission and Vision Statements:

Directly relates to ANA's and NNA's core issue of Patient Safety/Advocacy

References:

1. "Children's Health Coverage: States Moving Forward: Implications for SCHIP Reauthorization; May 2007", Georgetown University Health Policy Institute: Center for Children and Families
2. "State Options For Expanding Health Insurance Coverage and Strengthening the Health Care Safety Net", Nebraska Health Insurance Policy Coalition, August 2005
3. "Recommendations for Expanding Health Insurance Coverage for Individual and Families in the Small Employer Market", Nebraska Health Insurance Policy Coalition, March 2007
4. "Kids Connection: Cost-Effective Healthcare for Low-Income Nebraska Children", Voices for Children in Nebraska. www.voicesforchildren.com
5. S.1224 "To amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes" In the Senate of the United States, April 25, 2007

Proposed Implementation Activities:

1. Establish an SCHIP task force
2. Establish collaborative relationships with groups such as NEA, AARP, NHA, and others with same stated goal
3. Provide testimony and personal contact with individuals and groups involved in the legislative process
4. Contact legislators and other Nebraska Health Care officials regarding NNA support of Kids Connection

Range of Direct Costs:

None

Funding Available from Alternative Sources:

N/A