



January 23, 2009

The Honorable Dean Cameron
Idaho State Senate
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0081

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Dear Senator Cameron:

The Idaho Voices for Children health care work group has met several times to develop objectives and strategies for increasing enrollment of low income children in the Medicaid and S-CHIP program. We have had three goals in mind in developing these approaches:

1. Develop approaches that are consistent with the Governor's Select Committee on Health Care priorities
2. Ensure recommended approaches are consistent with federal S-CHIP reauthorization legislation currently moving through Congress
3. Build on the knowledge our committee members have of what is not currently working in Idaho's enrollment strategies.

The national legislation focuses on removing barriers to enrollment and re-enrollment and in fact includes additional funds for outreach activities. The Governor's Select Committee is emphasizing enrolling eligible children now. At the Governor's Follow-up Summit on January 17, 2009 the small group on insurance discussed at length focusing enrollment activities on the school lunch program. This discussion included a discussion about asking the Department of Education to add children's health insurance to the current enrollment form. Since the populations are almost identical this might be an easy first step to move Idaho ahead with outreach. At the present time, the Department of Education leaves it up to individual districts to decide how to handle the potential add-on for children's health insurance. Linking insurance and the school lunch program has been one of the best "model" approaches to outreach in other states.

We are also hopeful that even in this bad economy you may be able to provide the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare with matching funds from the Premium Assistance Fund for outreach activities.

Thank you for your assistance with this effort. I am attaching our full list of strategies for your review. I would be happy to meet with you and discuss these ideas with you. I am also attaching a list of the health care work group members for your information.

Sincerely,

Hollis Brookover

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IVC is the statewide organization advocating for public policies that improve the lives of children in Idaho