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Connecticut child advocates celebrate health reform victory

CT Voices for Children praises Supreme Court ruling upholding health reform law

Connecticut Voices for Children today cheered the U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding the health reform law, pointing to the many benefits and protections it offers for children in the state.

“This victory for health reform is a victory for all Connecticut children and families,” said Sharon Langer, Senior Policy Fellow at Connecticut Voices. “Many people don’t realize that the health reform law is already protecting children and ensuring that lower-income children can keep their HUSKY health care coverage.”

Connecticut Voices pointed to the end of discriminations against children with pre-existing conditions as one of the key benefits for families. Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, children can no longer be denied coverage based on health conditions which developed prior to their parents seeking enrollment. Up to 17 million children are estimated to have a pre-existing condition, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Children also are protected from lifetime caps on benefits under the health reform law.

Because the Supreme Court upheld the law, funding and coverage for children under the HUSKY program remains in effect. HUSKY currently covers over 250,000 children in Connecticut.

In addition, young adults and their families can breathe a sigh of relief because young adults under age 26 can continue to stay on their parents’ employer-sponsored health plan. As of December 2011, 23,000 young adults in Connecticut gained insurance coverage as a result of the health care law, according to HHS.

Expanded access is another key win, according to the child advocates. Before the passage of health reform, 45 million Americans were without access to quality care. But health reform’s expansion of Medicaid, extension of Children’s Health Insurance Program funding, subsidies for low-income families, and health insurance markets (called exchanges) will help more families in need get coverage for their children.

“Now that the fate of the health reform law is clear, Connecticut should move full speed ahead with implementation of the law,” said Sharon Langer. “We must start laying the groundwork if the law is to benefit everyone by 2014.”

Connecticut Voices for Children is a research-based think tank that works to advance policies that benefit the state’s children, youth, and families (www.ctvoices.org).

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