

# 2016 Federal Policy Agenda

Innovation at Work for America's Children



The Children's Partnership (TCP) works on a national scale with local, state, and federal partners to advance solutions that help all children, especially those from underserved communities, have the resources they need to become healthy, productive adults. In 2016, our work will focus on the following goals for America's children.

## HEALTH COVERAGE AND CARE

### **Secure the Promise of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for Children.**

Health Insurance Marketplaces are providing coverage for millions of families across the country. We continue to work toward ensuring that the Marketplace works well for children and families, both in California and across the nation. We will continue our work to make sure the enrollment process in both the Marketplace and Medicaid is seamless for all members of the family and that, once children are enrolled in coverage, they are receiving quality care, and there are enough providers to meet all of their health care needs.

*In 2016, TCP will:*

- Use the California experience of ACA implementation and its impact on children's health to develop recommendations for how implementation in other states may better serve children and educate other state advocates interested in exchanging ideas and lessons learned;
- Share best practices from TCP's California-based ALL IN For Health Campaign and educate stakeholders across the country about how they can equip school leaders with the tools they need to connect families to health coverage through the ACA and Medicaid;
- Analyze data to better understand and monitor families' experiences with the Marketplace and Medicaid, especially families with complex circumstances, such as those with family members enrolled in different coverage programs (e.g., a parent enrolled in a state-based marketplace while their children are enrolled in Medicaid);

- Promote ways to make enrollment and renewal easier for all families, including using enrollment in other income-based programs to simplify the process, and develop recommendations for federal agencies to include in guidance for states;
- Promote the benefits package of the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and advocate the inclusion of such benefits in the "pediatric services" essential health benefit (EHB) requirements; and
- Seek and promote options for providing care to families currently locked out of subsidized health coverage programs.

### **Promote the Continued Impact of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).**

First enacted in 1997 with strong bipartisan support, CHIP funding was reauthorized in 2015, providing millions of families the security of affordable, comprehensive health coverage for their children. Federal funding for CHIP is again set to expire in 2017. We will continue to advocate CHIP as a proven and broadly supported way to provide affordable coverage that offers comprehensive and child-specific benefits to ensure children can be healthy and succeed.

*In 2016, TCP will:*

- Educate current and incoming policymakers and the public about the importance of CHIP and its comprehensive health benefits for children in California and across the country;
- Generate communications that advocate the prompt refunding of CHIP in 2017; and
- Ensure permanent and expanded use of Express Lane Eligibility authority is included in CHIP reauthorization in order to expedite health coverage enrollment and renewal for those in other income-based public programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, previously known as Food Stamps).

## **ORAL HEALTH**

### **Help Ensure All Children Receive Needed Dental Care.**

Nationally, tooth decay ranks as the most common chronic disease and unmet health care need of children. A primary reason for such poor dental health among children is the lack of access to dental care. In fact, even if children have health coverage through Medicaid, many of these children still go without needed care.

*In 2016, TCP will:*

- Work with national and state advocates to promote national solutions to ensure all children get needed dental care—such as through supporting federal legislation, commenting on federal regulations, and educating national audiences and other state stakeholders—to ensure underserved children receive needed care; and
- Educate communities throughout the country on how they can use teledentistry to bring dental care to where children are—such as at schools, Head Start centers, and other community sites.

## DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

### **Maximize Opportunities for Technology to Improve Health and Other Outcomes for Children.**

Technology is impacting every dimension of families' lives, and health information technology is transforming the way health care is delivered, received, managed, and paid for in the United States. As this electronic revolution accelerates, it is critical that the needs of children are considered, with special attention to children in low-income, minority, geographically isolated, foster care, and other underserved communities. If done correctly, these children can benefit disproportionately from technological advances.

*In 2016, TCP will:*

- Ensure that federal policies and investments in electronic care coordination and health information exchange address children's unique needs and support those who care for them;
- Empower the consumer, especially parents and older children, in managing their own health information, with particular attention to improving health and wellness outcomes for children;
- Work with national partners to support families by ensuring they understand technological tools and opportunities for their children's health; and
- Promote practical solutions for using telehealth to help children who face geographic and socioeconomic barriers get necessary care, such as identifying and sharing lessons learned from programs across the country that bring medical, mental, and dental health care to children at schools.

### **Leverage Technology to Promote Care Coordination and Empower Vulnerable Populations.**

Children and youth in foster care experience disconnected and, too often, ineffective and unnecessarily expensive services as they transition from placement to placement and move in and out of care. Electronic systems and records of care can connect providers and caregivers with the information they need to provide appropriate care, as well as empower foster youth to take charge of their own care as they transition into independence. Using lessons learned, we will apply them to other populations, such as children with special health care needs.

*In 2016, TCP will:*

- Increase the use of electronic information exchange to improve delivery and coordination of services for particularly vulnerable children, including those in foster care, in a manner that also protects their privacy;
- Develop a knowledge base about how best to utilize electronic information exchange and records to coordinate care and engage foster parents and youth, among other underserved consumers, in their own care; and
- Disseminate lessons learned from efforts in California and nationally to improve care coordination and increase family engagement through digital tools and electronic information exchange.

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