



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

December 1, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leaders Schumer and Pelosi:

Please take immediate action to reauthorize federal funds for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The program provides coverage for 400,000 Texas kids for services such as regular check-ups, prescription drugs and acute care.

Without immediate reauthorization or redistribution of funds, Texas will, as soon as February, exhaust funding for the program. State law requires that the program be terminated once funding is exhausted. Thus, absent any action by the federal government, Texas will begin the process of terminating CHIP by notifying enrollees the program will end due to a lack of federal funding. The state must then implement systems changes to appropriately assess new applicants and end coverage for existing enrollees.

Reauthorization of CHIP is necessary because the commercial insurance market is unstable due, in large part, to the Affordable Care Act and other measures that have made it difficult and costly to obtain health care policies that meet the needs of individuals, families and businesses.

While Congress considers reauthorization, the state requested the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) delay termination through the redistribution of funds. On November 30, CMS notified Texas the projected redistribution amount could total approximately \$190 million. If correct, that amount would sustain CHIP through February 2018. We ask that you

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Paul Ryan
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
December 1, 2017
Page 2

expedite distribution of these funds to Texas as soon as possible so that we can delay program termination activities.

The real solution is for Congress to reauthorize CHIP funding. Currently, there is legislation that was passed by the House and is pending before the Senate. This is positive movement. However, time is of the essence. Please reauthorize CHIP and urge CMS to immediately commit and provide redistribution funding to Texas before the state must notify families that the program has been terminated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Greg Abbott
Governor

cc: Texas Congressional Delegation
Administrator Seema Verma, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services