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American Academy  
of Pediatrics



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#### Media contacts:

American Academy of Pediatrics: Jamie Poslosky (202-724-3301; [jposlosky@aap.org](mailto:jposlosky@aap.org))

Georgetown University Center for Children & Families: Catherine Hope (202-687-1058;

[Catherine.Hope@georgetown.edu](mailto:Catherine.Hope@georgetown.edu))

### Leading Children's Health and Medical Groups React to Staggering Decline in Children's Enrollment in Public Health Insurance Coverage

*About 840,000 fewer children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP in 2018*

**Washington, DC**—Leading children's health and medical organizations are sounding the alarm; new data show that the number of children enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) nationwide fell by about 840,000 in 2018.

In response to these numbers, the American Academy of Pediatrics, Children's Defense Fund, Children's Dental Health Project, Children's Hospital Association, Family Voices, First Focus on Children, Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, March of Dimes and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners issued the following statement:

“After years of progress improving children's health and dental coverage, we are losing ground, and children are suffering the consequences. Nearly one-third of America's children rely on Medicaid and CHIP for comprehensive, affordable coverage, including children in foster care, children who live in or near poverty, and children with disabilities or special health care needs. These are the children who need coverage the most. For these kids, no coverage often means no care.

“The number of children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP fell by over 840,000 nationwide. Enrollment losses of this magnitude are especially concerning at a time when the United States is facing numerous public health crises, such as the largest measles outbreak in decades, an opioid epidemic, and staggering rates of adolescent suicide.

“Children's coverage is susceptible to changes in federal and state policies and operations, and efforts to undermine Medicaid and CHIP have created uncertainty and unnecessary barriers to accessing coverage. This

leaves children worse off and less likely to be enrolled, jeopardizing their long-term health. In 2017, the number of uninsured children increased for the first time in almost a decade, with 276,000 more U.S. children becoming uninsured. While 2018 insurance rates are not available yet, the dramatic decline in Medicaid and CHIP enrollment in 2018 cannot be ignored.

“We must act quickly to keep Medicaid and CHIP strong and connect children with the health and dental coverage they need to succeed. States have made historic gains in covering children, but with coverage rates stalling or moving backwards in most states, we must double down on efforts to reach and enroll eligible children, focus on system improvements to keep them covered, and ensure that parents have health insurance so that they can keep themselves and their families healthy.”

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### **About the American Academy of Pediatrics**

*The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit [aap.org](http://aap.org) and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.*

### **About the Children’s Defense Fund**

*The Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for more than 40 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. We provide a strong, effective and independent voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor children, children of color and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investments before they get sick, drop out of school, get into trouble or suffer family breakdown.*

### **About the Children’s Dental Health Project**

*The Children’s Dental Health Project (CDHP) is a Washington, DC-based policy organization that advances solutions so that, one day, no child will suffer from tooth decay. We believe no family should be held back from its dreams due to dental disease. Learn more at [www.cdhp.org](http://www.cdhp.org), on Twitter at @Teeth\_Matter or Facebook at @childrensdentalhealth*

### **About the Children’s Hospital Association**

*The Children’s Hospital Association is the national voice of more than 220 children’s hospitals, advancing child health through innovation in the quality, cost and delivery of care.*

### **About Family Voices**

*[Family Voices](#) is a national, nonprofit, family-led organization promoting quality health care for all children and youth, particularly those with special health care needs. Working with family leaders and professional partners at the local, state, regional, and national levels since 1992, Family Voices has brought a respected family perspective to improving health care programs and policies and ensuring that health care systems include, listen to, and honor the voices of families.*

### **About First Focus on Children**

*First Focus on Children is a bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy and budget decisions. First Focus on Children leads a comprehensive advocacy strategy, with its hands-on experience with federal policymaking and a commitment to seeking policy solutions.*

### **About the Georgetown University Center for Children & Families**

*The Georgetown University Center for Children & Families (CCF), part of the Health Policy Institute at the*

*McCourt School of Public Policy, is an independent, nonpartisan policy and research center with a mission to expand and improve high-quality, affordable health coverage.*

**About March of Dimes**

*March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies. We support research, lead programs and provide education and advocacy so that every baby can have the best possible start. Building on a successful 80-year legacy of impact and innovation, we empower every mom and every family.*

**About the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners**

*The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) is the nation's only professional association for pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) and their fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who are dedicated to improving the quality of health care for infants, children, adolescents and young adults. Representing more than 9,000 healthcare practitioners with 19 special interest groups and 50 chapters, NAPNAP has been advocating for children's health since 1973 and was the first NP society in the U.S. Our mission is to empower pediatric-focused PNPs and their interprofessional partners to enhance child and family health through leadership, advocacy, professional practice, education and research.*