



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

Lawmakers, Advocates Rally for Continuous Health Coverage for the Youngest New Yorkers

SAMRA G. BROUK January 8, 2024



ALBANY - State Senator Samra Brouk and Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas rallied at the New York State Capitol today with advocacy groups, healthcare labor unions, parents, pediatricians, and other lawmakers to call on Governor Hochul to include their legislation, [A8146/S7747](#), to provide continual coverage for children in Medicaid or the Child Health Plus (CHP) from birth to age 6, in the State of the State and Executive Budget Proposal.

Nearly half of all children and over three-quarters of low-income children in New York rely on Medicaid and CHP for their health care. Currently, parents must re-enroll their children in these programs each year, regardless of whether their eligibility has changed.

Continuous Medicaid coverage for young children would improve health outcomes, prevent financial hardship, and address coverage gaps for families. Children with stable health coverage are more likely to experience improved health outcomes, lower rates of disability, higher educational attainment, and more financial security in adulthood.

Several other states currently provide continuous enrollment for the youngest children, including Colorado, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington. At today's rally, speakers urged Governor Hochul to ensure that New York State is next by including [A8146/S7747](#) in her Executive Budget Proposal.

"Any time a child cannot access the medical care they need, we must reflect on the policy failures that are getting in the way. This legislation is an important part of New York's overall strategy to support working families," **said Senator Samra Brouk**. "Young children in New York State deserve uninterrupted access to the preventive and primary care they need to thrive. We have a moral obligation to ensure that we are doing everything in our power to set our children up for healthy, successful futures, and I encourage the Governor and my colleagues in the legislature to prioritize this legislation as we head into budget negotiations."

"As a member of the Assembly Health Committee I was proud to introduce legislation last month with Senator Brouk, [A8146/S7747](#), which would provide continued health coverage to children from birth to age 6 in Medicaid or CHIP. We learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that the administrative burden for re-enrollment disproportionately impacts low-income

families and children and children of color. Continued coverage would have incredible benefits. As a mother I believe this proposal is critical because we should do everything we can to keep our children healthy. Oregon and Washington have already implemented this change and other states have introduced similar legislation because this improves health outcomes and drives down costs. I look forward to working with Governor Hochul and the legislature to make this a reality,” **said Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas.**

“Many people do not realize that so many healthcare workers taking care of other people’s families do not have insurance of their own which means that our children & grandchildren often depend on Medicaid to be healthy. Gaps in coverage are problematic for our kids for many reasons—missed checkups, untreated asthma, and conditions that become severe when they could have been prevented,” **said Anna Luisa Medina, a homecare worker from the Bronx who has two grandchildren currently on Medicaid.**

“New York has been a national leader when it comes to improving and expanding healthcare coverage, and there is no reason to fall behind now in protecting children from having gaps in coverage, which can have profound consequences on their health, education and the financial security of their families” **said Elisabeth R. Benjamin, Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Community Service Society.** “Providing continuous coverage to children under the age of six is the right thing to do from a policy and fiscal perspective. CSS commends Assemblymember Gonzalez-Rojas and Senator Brouk for their leadership on this issue and urges Governor Hochul to include A8146/S7747 in her Executive Budget”.

“This is exactly the right focus for ensuring the health of New Yorkers. Investing early in children promotes health for a lifetime and is the most important thing we can do for future health and healthcare savings,” **said Jeff Kaczorowski, MD, NYS American Academy of Pediatrics.**

"New York has long been a leader in providing public health insurance coverage, like Medicaid and Child Health Plus, to people with low income across our state. These programs are the reason millions of New Yorkers can access needed care and services, especially children. Parents and caregivers have enough on their plates without having to worry about enrollment paperwork. Several other states have eliminated annual paperwork barriers by providing continuous coverage, and New York should be next." **said Lara Kassel, Coalition Coordinator, Medicaid Matters New York.**

"New York should be at the forefront of reforming enrollment processes and coverage for children 0-6 years of age in Medicaid and Child Health Plus. At least two states have now adopted a multi-year continuous coverage model for young children, while several others are considering similar reforms. New York has an opportunity to better protect low-income young children and their caregivers by eliminating gaps in coverage caused by needless procedural burdens. Poverty is a policy choice and we have an opportunity here to make the right choice for our children," said **Richard R. Buery, Jr., CEO of Robin Hood, New York City's largest local poverty fighting philanthropy.** "We applaud Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas and State Senator Samra Brouk for their leadership on this issue and encourage Governor Hochul and state lawmakers to enact legislation that will provide continuous Medicaid coverage to eligible children from when they are first enrolled in Medicaid until the age of six."

"Keeping New York's children and babies insured means keeping them healthy. Continuous health care coverage from ages 0-6 means parents can access regular check-ups, scheduled vaccines, and preventive health services for their child during the crucial early years, giving them a healthy start. Even a short gap in health insurance coverage can result in a child missing needed care and interventions. The Schuyler Center urges Governor Hochul to include this important proposal in her Executive Budget. A budget that supports the health

and well-being of all of New York’s children is crucial to the future of our state,” **said Kate Breslin, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.**

“Continuous coverage from birth through age 6 years is a game changer for New York’s children and families. By eliminating disruptions in health insurance coverage, New York State creates a foundation for equitable access to preventive healthcare and care for illness and injuries throughout early childhood to keep our babies healthy,” **said Laura Jean Shipley, MD, UR Medicine/Golisano Children’s Hospital.**

"We see the cumulative effect of the circumstances that qualify our adult clients for Medicaid in the first place, and it’s why any disruption in Medicaid coverage for children has an exacerbated impact on low-income families," said **Rachel Holtzman, Equal Justice Works Fellow with the New York Legal Assistance Group.** "These are families already navigating economic hardship in an inequitable healthcare system. They're already facing significant obstacles in accessing the critical care their children need at home and in their communities—obstacles Medicaid is meant to alleviate—and disruptions to the very coverage designed to *ensure* that access, shouldn't be one of them."

RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S7747

-
- Introduced
 - ◦ In Committee Assembly

- In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
- On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
- Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Provides public health insurance coverage for children who are eligible for such coverage under the age of six to continue until they reach the age of six

November 13, 2023

In Senate Committee **Health**

Sponsored by **Samra G. Brouk**

Do you support this bill?