



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

# Children's Health Bill Signed Into Law

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

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(Albany, NY) Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th District - D/WF) announced that the Child Health Plus and School Meals Enrollment Coordination Act (S4057B) has been signed into law by Governor David Paterson. This legislation, introduced by Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins will assist the approximately 220,000 children in New York State who are currently uninsured, but are eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus. Since the majority of children who are not participating in Child Health Plus are attending school and qualify for the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Program, this law coordinates the sharing of information to better serve our State's children.

“The Child Health Plus and School Meals Enrollment Coordination Act will better protect the health and nutrition of all of our most vulnerable children. Increasing access to information and sharing services enhances efficiency and essentially doubles our reach. With over 270,000 children in New York State who are eligible for either Medicaid or Child Health Plus, this legislation will remove the duplication of efforts that are imposed upon families through the application processes for either Medicaid or Child Health Plus and the School Meals program, giving students greater opportunities as a result of proper medical attention and nutrition throughout their school-age years,” said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

Access to health care is critically important to young children. Poor, uninsured children face many serious risks because leaving treatable and preventable conditions undiagnosed can have lifelong harmful effects on their functioning and opportunities. Deferred or neglected care also cuts children off from the routine health care provided in primary care settings that includes child-specific, age-appropriate screening, diagnosis, and treatment of both chronic and acute conditions. A third of uninsured children in New York go without any medical treatment for the entire year in a society where 88% of insured children receive care in the same time span.

This legislation is an important measure to create access to health care for all uninsured children, and it impacts minority children particularly, because in New York State, uninsured Hispanic children are 10 times more likely than uninsured African-American children to miss out on the medical care they need, while uninsured African-American children are 20 times more likely to miss out on necessary medical care than their insured counterparts.

The measure was supported by the United Way of New York City, the Children’s Defense Fund, Medicaid Matters, Healthcare for All New Yorkers Coalition, and Human Services Council.

The bill will take effect in June of 2011 and applies to the 2011-2012 academic year.