

# **Medicaid**

## **Medicaid Matters New York**

# **Matters**



June 22, 2010

### **Memorandum of Support**

**A.7515-B, Kavanagh/S.4057-B, Stewart-Cousins**

*AN ACT to amend the Public Health Law and the Social Services Law, in relation to establishing the Child Health Plus and School Meals Enrollment Coordination Act of 2011*

Medicaid Matters New York (MMNY) is a statewide coalition of over 130 organizations representing the interests of New Yorkers who rely on the public health insurance programs – Medicaid, Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus – for their health and well-being. The members of MMNY are united in their determination to ensure that the concerns and needs of Medicaid consumers are understood, included and met in any discussion on Medicaid. MMNY submits this memorandum in support of Assembly Bill 7515-E/Senate Bill 4057-B, which would enact the Child Health Plus and School Meals Enrollment Coordination Act of 2011. This bill would allow families to use proof of enrollment in New York's School Meals Program as documentation of income for children applying for Medicaid and Child Health Plus.

MMNY has long advocated for measures that serve to streamline and simplify the enrollment processes for Medicaid and the other public health insurance programs. This bill would be an additional way to make it easier for those who are eligible to get enrolled.

Currently, all children already enrolled in the School Meals Program are eligible for either children's Medicaid or Child Health Plus, depending on their income and immigration status. Drawing upon the on-the-ground enrollment experiences of facilitated enrollers, we know that families need the most assistance when trying to prove their income—especially those families who do not receive regular paychecks. According to the Survey of Income and Program Participation data gathered in 2007, an estimated 43,000 children enrolled in School Meals were eligible, but not enrolled in public health insurance. This legislation would make public health insurance enrollment significantly easier for eligible families who have difficulty providing documentation to prove their income and would help the state serve some of our most vulnerable children.

There is no federal requirement for states to require income documentation. In fact, federal law encourages states to use electronic data systems to verify income and to make use of Express Lane Enrollment which allows a child deemed eligible for school meals to be automatically found eligible for public health insurance, which the state has not yet implemented.

Eliminating documentation of income and allowing proof of eligibility for school meals to stand as proof of income will also increase state efficiency and alleviate the income documentation processing burden placed on local social service districts. Eleven out of 12 states that have eliminated documentation of income reported faster eligibility determinations and increased productivity.

This bill would help ensure that low-income families are able to easily be enrolled in health coverage for their children. MMNY urges swift passage of S.4057-B/A.7515-B.