



# MEDIKIDS

*There are 4.4 million uninsured children in America. Let's make that number 0.*

The goal of MediKids is simple: every child, in every state, from birth to age 26, will be covered by Medicaid. No income limits. No submitting paperwork over and over. Just automatic enrollment at birth, and coverage is guaranteed. It is that simple. Just as we have promised our seniors coverage through Medicare, now it is time to extend that guarantee to our youngest and most vulnerable, our children.

## **S. 5037, the MediKids Act**

The MediKids Act is simple. Under MediKids every child:

- is automatically enrolled at birth;
- maintains continuous eligibility until age 26;
- does not need to be a U.S. citizen; and
- is, if a young adult, exempt from the work requirements under H.R. 1.

MediKids will cover 100% of the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for this population, meaning states will bear no additional costs.

## BACKGROUND

Congress has acted previously to address gaps in children's access to health coverage, from the creation of Medicaid in 1965 to the establishment of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 1997. Yet as a nation, we have never achieved true universal coverage for children. In 2018, following coverage gains due to the Affordable Care Act, the rate of uninsured children in the United States hit its historic low of 5.5%—but that meant that one in twenty children were still uninsured. Since then, rates have increased again and now, in 2026, rates are up to nearly 6% of children uninsured. Worse, a 2021 study found that 34% of children—one in three—is underinsured, meaning their health insurance coverage is not consistent or inadequate to meet their needs. Young adults also experience the highest uninsurance rates of any adult population before Medicare eligibility.

## WHY MEDIKIDS?

*MediKids is the path forward.* It is time to finally guarantee children the health coverage they need, and to act on our obligation to give our children a better future. MediKids is the right path to expanding coverage for all kids and young adults, and because it is built on the existing Medicaid system, it can be implemented quickly.

*MediKids is designed for kids.* MediKids is built on Medicaid, which was designed for children and includes the robust Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit.

*To cosponsor the MediKids Act, please contact Sara Maskornick at [sara\\_maskornick@kim.senate.gov](mailto:sara_maskornick@kim.senate.gov).*



EPSDT provides comprehensive and preventive health care services, including vaccines and behavioral and mental health services.

*MediKids is a sound investment in our children's futures.* Medicaid is a cost-effective investment in children's health: for every \$1 the federal government spends on Medicaid, it saves \$4 in future costs, including less reliance on the Earned Income Tax Credit and higher earnings as adults.

*MediKids can help address intergenerational issues like maternal mortality.* A 2023 study found that Medicaid coverage of pregnant women carries health impacts through at least two generations and also found that we may be *underestimating* the financial savings of Medicaid coverage for children. We must raise healthier children so they can grow into healthier parents for the next generation.

*Experts have recommended these policies.* A 2024 report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommended several policies in MediKids, including universal access to Medicaid for everyone under age 26, automatic enrollment and continuous eligibility for the eligible population.



**National groups:** AFSCME, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, Center for Law and Social Policy, Families USA, First Focus Campaign for Children, MomsRising, National Association of School Nurses, NEA, Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, What To Expect Project, ZERO TO THREE.

**New Jersey groups:** American Academy of Pediatrics NJ Chapter, CASA for Children of Morris and Sussex Counties, Court Appointed Special Advocates of New Jersey, NAACP NJ, National Council on Severe Autism - NJ Chapter, New Jersey Citizen Action, NJ Consortium for Immigrant Children, NJEA, Save Latin America, Save Our Schools, SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, The Arc of NJ.