



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Children's Dental Health Project Applauds Congressional Leaders for Investment in Oral Health with Passage of Historic Health Reform**

With Passage, Millions More Children Have Dental Coverage

*Washington, DC* – The Children's Dental Health Project (CDHP) today applauds Congress and, in particular, Senator Jeff Bingaman, for enacting significant oral health provisions in the health care reform bill signed into law today by President Obama. The passage of this historic health care reform bill represents an unprecedented investment in the oral health of Americans.

Congress recognized that oral health is essential to overall health and took major steps toward countering the "silent epidemic" of dental disease among America's children. The new legislation promotes early and effective prevention, assures families that they can obtain dental insurance for their children, and strengthens oral health care across the country.

"Good oral health is essential to good overall health. This new law will help ensure that millions more Americans have access to dental care. This represents a major improvement to our nation's health care safety net," said U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman, who worked to include the dental provisions in the final bill.

Burton Edelstein, Founding Chair of the Children's Dental Health Project noted that "In combination with Medicaid and the CHIP reforms passed last year, millions more children are assured of dental coverage and access to dental care. Through passage of health reform, Congress has ensured that children's dental coverage is as important as their medical coverage."

Among the provisions directed specifically at improving America's oral health are:

- **Expanded coverage.** A Significant investment in ensuring access to public and private dental coverage for children in America.
- **Prevention.** Dental disease prevention initiatives including public education, school-based sealant programs in all 50 states and research grants to improve the prevention and management of tooth decay in young children.
- **Tracking and monitoring.** Resources for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other federal agencies to assess American’s oral health and dental care with a special emphasis on pregnant women.
- **Workforce development.** Expanded education of dental professionals and those who train and educate future dental caregivers in rural areas and among underserved populations. Grants to allow study options for new dental care providers.
- **Safety net improvements.** Support for dental programs in school-based and community-based health centers. Creation of a new commission to study oral healthcare workforce capacity.
- **Medicaid and CHIP.** Expands Medicaid coverage and increases Federal government’s contribution to Medicaid in all states, extends the CHIP program for five years, and addresses payment to dentists and other healthcare professionals through the Medicaid and CHIP Access and Payment Commission (“MACPAC”).
- **Infrastructure improvements.** Support for states to bolster their dental public health programs through leadership development, oral health data collection and interpretation, and best use of science to improve oral health.

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

The Children's Dental Health Project advances policies that improve children's access to oral health through research-driven policies and innovative solutions by engaging a broad base of partners committed to children and oral health. For additional information please visit, [www.cdhp.org](http://www.cdhp.org).