

March 24, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

The March of Dimes, a unique partnership of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community and other volunteers affiliated with chapters in every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, would like to take this opportunity to offer our support for H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

The March of Dimes applauds your efforts to craft bipartisan legislation extending funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) well in advance of the scheduled expiration of funding in September of this year. As you are aware, CHIP provides coverage to over 5 million children and over 370,000 pregnant women across our nation each year. CHIP provides quality, affordable coverage to many families who would have few or no insurance options otherwise. Of special note, CHIP offers coverage year-round to uninsured pregnant women who might otherwise have to wait for Exchange open enrollment season to obtain coverage and care.

Timely extension of CHIP funding will give states the stability and certainty necessary to maintain their CHIP programs uninterrupted. Further delay in CHIP reauthorization could result in states being forced to send out cancellation notices, which would create substantial confusion and disruption for enrollees, even if the program were later extended. The March of Dimes commends your effort to take action well in advance of the CHIP expiration deadline, thus sparing enrollees potential loss of coverage and states a considerable administrative burden.

The March of Dimes also appreciates the extension of the Pediatric Quality Measures Program (PQMP) for two additional years. This program has proven critical to efforts to develop, refine and spur adoption of quality measures in pediatric care settings. Given that H.R. 2 dedicates substantial resources to the establishment of a new quality-based payment system for Medicare, we thank you for ensuring that the sole federal pediatric quality measurement initiative can also continue its vital work.

The March of Dimes remains committed to funding CHIP through its authorization period in 2019, and is disappointed that H.R. 2 foregoes the opportunity to do so. Four years of funding would provide CHIP with a high degree of stability and certainty, enhancing the program's ability to serve children and pregnant women appropriately. We look forward to working with you to further extend CHIP coverage until 2019 during the 114th Congress.

Once again, the March of Dimes appreciates the tremendous effort required to produce this bipartisan legislation. We look forward to working with you to ensure that all children and pregnant women have ample access to quality, affordable coverage options, including CHIP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Howse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" and the last name "Howse" clearly distinguishable.

Dr. Jennifer L. Howse
President