



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 11, 2017

The Honorable Eric Hargan
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Secretary Hargan:

As a public health expert, I know that you share my belief that the future of our children is dependent on their access to health care. Unfortunately, due to Congress' and the President's failure to renew the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the health care for 350,000 New York children is now in jeopardy.

This is not a partisan issue, but a program that provides essential health services for vulnerable children. CHIP has been a tremendous success in New York, leading to an 85% reduction in the number of uninsured children over the past two decades and saving countless lives in the process. When New York exhausts its CHIP funding allotment, it will not be able to continue the current Child Health Plus program. New York cannot continue the current program without federal funding. When the State determines there are insufficient funds to provide coverage for the next month, the State will notify CMS of its intent to no longer provide CHIP eligibility and services.

If Congress fails to renew funding for the program in the next few weeks, the Governor will have no choice but to call a special session of the Legislature. However, it is unlikely the Legislature can fill a \$1 billion hole left by the Federal Government to continue to provide coverage to all the children currently enrolled in CHIP.

The inaction of Congress and the Administration has jeopardized the health care of millions of the nation's children, 350,000 of whom live in New York. We urge you to renew CHIP now before the lives of children are put at risk.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Howard Zucker, M.D.
Commissioner
Department of Health

cc. Ms. Seema Verma, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services