

KCHIP Simplification

In July 2007, Kentucky's Children's Health Insurance Program or KCHIP provided health insurance for approximately 55,000 children who would have otherwise been uninsured. However, it is estimated that at least **50,000** children from working families are currently eligible for KCHIP but remain uninsured in the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, unnecessary red tape in the KCHIP enrollment process keeps many families from signing up. Studies show that restrictive procedures such as face-to-face interviews and month-to-month eligibility determination result in declining enrollment.

The legislation would:

- Make it easier for Kentucky families to enroll children who are already eligible in KCHIP.
- Update outdated practices that are barriers to enrollment.
- Reduce administrative costs by removing steps that are unnecessary.

WHAT EXACTLY WOULD THE BILL DO?

– **Eliminate face-to-face interview for enrollment in KCHIP**

Kentucky used to have a mail-in application and the face-to-face requirement was reinstated in 2002. 46 states currently do not require a face-to-face interview. In fact, Kentucky joins Mississippi and Tennessee as a few of the last remaining hold-outs of this practice. The removal of the face-to-face interview does not change any income verification procedures or the citizenship documentation process. This archaic step is not required by federal law and would remove barriers to getting children enrolled.

– **Create an online renewal and application process**

In addition to eliminating face-to-face interviews, an online KCHIP application would significantly improve access to KCHIP for working families and help facilitate the enrollment process. Additionally, an online application process would reduce workload for DCBS staff by eliminating the need for staff time to re-enter information or meet with families that wish to apply. There are many new technologies available to electronically verify income and other documents that are needed to fully enroll children into this program.

– **Allow children to get health services while their KCHIP application is being processed**

This "presumptive eligibility" provision would allow "qualified entities" including clinics, hospitals, schools, and Head Start programs to screen children for eligibility when they have a health care need and temporarily enroll children in KCHIP so they can receive services. Families would then have a certain amount of time to complete the application process. 14 states have instituted this policy including Louisiana and Missouri. No states that have adopted presumptive eligibility have a face to face enrollment provision.

– **Allow children to remain enrolled for 12 months at a time**

Continuous eligibility for KCHIP promotes stable and secure coverage by allowing a child to remain enrolled in KCHIP for an entire year. Continuous eligibility is cost-effective, as it saves administrative costs related to certifying income eligibility on a monthly basis. 16 states have adopted this provision, including Tennessee and Texas.