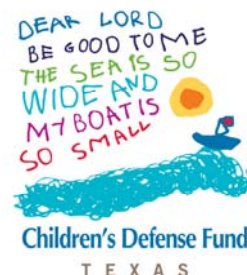


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Baker Institute Weighs in on Children's Health

Leading Business, Health Economics and Policy Experts Agree Current Costs of Uninsured Children Far Exceed Costs of Reform

HOUSTON, TX—On Tuesday, September 1st, leading child advocacy groups in Texas were joined by community leaders to urge Congress to enact comprehensive health reform for children that will ensure all children have access to health coverage that is **affordable, comprehensive and simple**.

The conference was held at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy and convened by leading Texas children's groups including the Children's Defense Fund, Children at Risk and Texans Together. Leading industry experts discussed the economic impact of uninsured children on America and the fiscal urgency to enact national healthcare reform to cover all children.

"When Congress reconvenes one week from today, lawmakers will continue to finalize health reform legislation that will seal the fate of millions of uninsured and underinsured children. National healthcare reform provides an enormous opportunity to ensure that Texas' 1.5 million uninsured children have access to affordable and comprehensive health coverage with simple and seamless enrollment," said Laura Guerra-Cardus, M.D., interim director of the Children's Defense Fund of Texas.

The Baker Institute reported that the estimated cost in 2008 of expanding health insurance coverage to all children was \$9.6 billion. This amount is relatively small compared to the estimated additional costs of \$112.9 billion that would be required to cover uninsured adults. The \$9.6 billion figure is also relatively small compared to total national health expenditures, estimated at \$2.4 trillion.

Dr. Vivian Ho, Chair in Health Economics at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University said, ***"Covering all children in the U.S. with health insurance will be cost-saving to society. The value of improved health status, increased life expectancy, and greater workforce productivity due to insurance coverage outweighs the estimated incremental costs of covering 8 million children who lack health insurance."***

"The relative cost of insuring children through health reform is low compared with the current economic impact of the uninsured that we as a nation already absorb," said Ho.

The panelists represented a broad cross section of business, academic and health care leaders, including remarks from Congressman Gene Green, State Representatives Garnet Coleman and Ellen Cohen, Vivian Ho, PhD, Chair in Health Economics at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Anne Dunkelberg, Associate Director, Center for Public Policy Priorities, Lan Bentsen, Chairman, Children's Defense Fund-Texas Advisory Board and Member, Greater Houston Partnership, Dr. Bob Sanborn, President and CEO, Children at Risk, R. King Hillier, V.P. Public Policy & Government Relations, Harris County Hospital District, Dr. Laura Guerra-Cardus, Interim Director and Policy Director, Children's Defense Fund-Texas, and Maureen Haver, Houston Director, Texans Together. All agreed that the economic and social costs are too great to ignore and that Congress must make the wise and necessary investment in children's health care to ensure the needs of children are met before it is too late.

"Covering uninsured children is the economically prudent thing to do for Texas and Texas taxpayers. A report from the Greater Houston Partnership, endorsed by the largest chambers of commerce in Texas, demonstrates that the savings incurred by providing health coverage to Texas children far outweighs

the cost. Texas has a chance to be a big winner with comprehensive health coverage for children,” said Lan Bentsen, co-founder of an international oil company and member of the Greater Houston Partnership.

About the Children’s Defense Fund

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for more than 35 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. We champion policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to health care, quality education, and a moral and spiritual foundation.

The CDF Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities

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