



October 29, 2009

## Your Mail: LaCHIP works

*Town Talk staff*

As our leaders deliberate on the future of our country's health care system, I would like to request that we, as Louisianans, protect our state's most valuable resource -- our children. The Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families is devoted to improving the well being of children by addressing health, education, social-emotional development, parenting education and family support. The Partnership would like to issue a call to action to identify eligible families for coverage through the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program.

Developmentally, intellectually and socially, access to regular and adequate health care is essential to a child's future health. LaCHIP provides quality health care to tens of thousands of children throughout Louisiana. While Louisiana boasts a 95 percent coverage rate for eligible children, the remaining 5 percent of uninsured children represent more than 60,000. Even one child without adequate health care is too many.

A 2001 American Academy of Pediatrics study, which analyzed differences in access to care between children with continuous health insurance and those who experienced no insurance or gaps in coverage, found continuous insurance coverage, whether public or private, eliminated or substantially reduced access problems. Uninsured children and children with insurance gaps experienced notable problems, including failure to get medical care, unfilled prescriptions, and no preventive visits. The study also showed most of these children were eligible for some form of health coverage.

As the school bells ring, the Department of Health and Hospitals, partner organizations and volunteers will be participating in enrollment blitzes across the state in effort to spread the word about LaCHIP and identify that remaining 5 percent of uninsured children. I urge parents to find out if your family or a family you know is eligible for LaCHIP or the LaCHIP Affordable Plan. I encourage uninsured teenagers under the age of 19 to learn more about what each program offers. LaCHIP makes it simple to enroll and to remain enrolled. I implore anyone who cares about children to discover how he or she can help give the children of Louisiana the tools they need to succeed.

Together, we can assure the children of Louisiana a healthy and successful future.

**Lynda Gavioli**

# La. Partnership for Children and Families

Baton Rouge

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