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Advocates for children and families applaud Hochul administration for committing to continuous health insurance coverage from birth to age six

New York has long been a leader in providing affordable, comprehensive coverage in public health insurance programs. Governor Hochul has built on this legacy by raising Medicaid income eligibility for older adults and people with disabilities, expanding the Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities, and more. Now New York is poised to become the next state to provide continuous coverage in Medicaid and Child Health Plus for the youngest New Yorkers through an intent to apply for Section 1115 Medicaid Waiver authority to do so.

Enacting continuous coverage for children until they reach age six will keep New York on the forefront of protecting and investing in our youngest children and their families across the state.

“New York has been a national leader when it comes to improving and expanding healthcare coverage. Now our state will continue this legacy by protecting children from having gaps in coverage, which can have profound consequences on their health, education, and the financial security of their families” said **Elisabeth R. Benjamin, Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Community Service Society.** “Providing continuous coverage to children under the age of six is the right thing to do from a policy and fiscal perspective. CSS commends Governor Hochul for making this commitment.”

“This is exactly the right focus for ensuring the health of New Yorkers. Investing early in children promotes health for a lifetime and is the most important thing we can do for future health and healthcare savings,” said **Jeff Kaczorowski, MD, NYS American Academy of Pediatrics.**

“New York has long been a leader in providing public health insurance coverage, like Medicaid and Child Health Plus, to people with low income across our state. These programs are the reason millions of New Yorkers can access needed care and services, especially children. Parents and caregivers have enough on their plates without having to worry about enrollment paperwork. Several other states have eliminated annual paperwork barriers by providing continuous coverage, and I’m so proud New York is ready to be next.” said **Lara Kassel, Coalition Coordinator, Medicaid Matters New York.**

“I am a parent of a child on the Autism Spectrum. He was diagnosed at two-and-a-half years old, and Medicaid served as a lifeline for us from the start for key services and supports. Throughout his life, he’s had gaps in medical care as a consequence of the re-enrollment

process. As a former family in temporary housing transitioning out of that system, and with the change of address and circumstances, the enrollment process was very complicated for us, leaving my son and I uninsured for some time. Providing continuous coverage for young children will ensure these strenuous processes don't result in families becoming uninsured even when they do qualify for Medicaid," said **Maggie Sanchez, parent in Queens, New York.**

"Robin Hood applauds Governor Hochul's announcement today that she will seek a federal waiver to provide continuous Medicaid coverage to children 0-6 years of age. At least two states have now adopted a multi-year continuous coverage model for young children, while several others are considering similar reforms. New York has an opportunity to better protect low-income young children and their caregivers by eliminating gaps in coverage caused by needless procedural burdens. Poverty is a policy choice and we have an opportunity here to make the right choice for our children," said **Richard R. Buery, Jr., CEO of Robin Hood, New York City's largest local poverty fighting philanthropy.** "This announcement by the Governor follows the critical leadership of Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas and State Senator Samra Brouk on this issue through their co-sponsorship of A8146/S7747, which would codify into law continuous Medicaid coverage to eligible children from when they are first enrolled in Medicaid until the age of six."

"Keeping New York's children and babies insured means keeping them healthy. Continuous health care coverage from ages 0-6 means parents can access regular check-ups, scheduled vaccines, and preventive health services for their child during the crucial early years, giving them a healthy start. Even a short gap in health insurance coverage can result in a child missing needed care and interventions. The Schuyler Center thanks Governor Hochul for including this important proposal in her State of the State address. A budget that supports the health and well-being of all of New York's children is crucial to the future of our state," said **Kate Breslin, President and CEO, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.**

"Children shouldn't lose access to healthcare simply because their parents picked up some seasonal work or a bit of overtime," said **Larry Marx, CEO of The Children's Agenda.** "But that's what happens when parents temporarily earn too much for their children to qualify for Medicaid. We have to stop the revolving door of healthcare access. Continuous Medicaid coverage from birth to 6 years is a commonsense solution that's good for kids. Ensuring continuity of care in the early years will save money in the long run and it's the right thing to do. Healthy kids succeed in school and in life."

"Continuous coverage from birth through age 6 years is a game changer for New York's children and families. By eliminating disruptions in health insurance coverage, New York State creates a foundation for equitable access to preventive healthcare and care for illness and injuries throughout early childhood to keep our babies healthy," said **Laura Jean Shipley, MD, UR Medicine/Golisano Children's Hospital.**

"We see the cumulative effect of the circumstances that qualify our adult clients for Medicaid in the first place, and it's why any disruption in Medicaid coverage for children has an exacerbated impact on low-income families," said **Rachel Holtzman, Equal Justice Works Fellow with the New York Legal Assistance Group.** "These are families already navigating economic hardship in an inequitable healthcare system. They're already facing significant obstacles in accessing the critical care their children need at home and in their communities —

obstacles Medicaid is meant to alleviate – and disruptions to the very coverage designed to *ensure* that access, shouldn't be one of them.”

This waiver will ensure substantial matching federal funds for a low-cost policy option that will reap many benefits for our state, including:

- **Greater health equity.** Continuous coverage protections advance health equity by ensuring continuity of treatment for low-income children and children of color, who disproportionately experience health disparities.
- **Better child and family health.** Continuity of coverage supports proven pediatric interventions, including developmental screening, prevention, and family-oriented two-generation services.
- **Reduced costs for families and lower administrative costs.** Cycling on and off Medicaid/CHP burdens families with out-of-pocket expenses and stressful deadlines; it also results in higher administrative costs for the state, insurers, and providers.
- **Stabilized preventive and pediatric health care systems.** Gaps in children’s coverage strain the finances of the primary care and pediatric infrastructure of our state. These providers already work long hours for lower reimbursement rates. Ensuring that their patients have continuous coverage will mean this vital component of our healthcare system will flourish.