

Ready, Set, REFUND CHIP!

Getting Your Coalition Ready for Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Defense

Funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (or CHIP for short) expires September 30, 2017. While states have [some flexibility](#) to fund their programs into 2018, there are very real concerns regarding Washington’s ability to move quickly to refund this essential children’s health coverage program. In an effort to ready ourselves for this pivot to CHIP from the most recent and ongoing ACA and Medicaid defense work, the following toolkit provides advocates with a set of tools to do exactly that – pivot and adjust the coalition work and its strategies and tactics to incorporate CHIP priorities.

In this toolkit, advocates can find:

1. Tips on pivoting your coalition in a rapidly shifting landscape
2. Tools to support an assessment of your coalition’s skills and capacity to advance a CHIP agenda
3. Five things that advocates can do to prepare—including assessment tools, communications tips and policy research resources
4. Guiding principles for safeguarding CHIP

Pivoting your coalition to prioritize CHIP.

Advocates can take a number of steps to prepare their coalition for CHIP defense. First, it is important to think through helpful strategies to pivot your coalition to include CHIP priorities. This issue brief provides a helpful set of helpful examples of how coalitions have done this successfully.

- Tips on how to pivot a coalition successfully can be found [HERE](#).

Second, it is important that all coalition partners understand how the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) works in partnership with Medicaid to keep children covered and ensure continuous access to health screenings, services and supports. The following [fact sheet](#) serves as a short “explainer” to refresh coalition members’ knowledge about what CHIP is, who is eligible for CHIP and what role the program plays in advancing children’s health opportunity across our country.

- You can find the document [HERE](#).
- You can find state specific program information [HERE](#).

Assessing what role your coalition can play in refunding CHIP.

Advocates are well versed in building and leveraging coalitions to advance policy change. Within coalitions, advocates can play very different roles across a spectrum of responsibilities from leading to supporting a policy campaign. As we enter into additional and intertwined campaigns within the health sector—including protecting the ACA, Medicaid expansion and traditional Medicaid—advocates will need to determine their capacity to lead or support the effort to defend and refund the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

For many state level consumer health advocates, a supportive role makes sense, particularly if they are in a state with a children’s health advocacy leadership network. For states where the lead advocacy group plays both the role of consumer health advocate and the role of children’s health advocate, the

decision is more nuanced (often based on bandwidth and funding). Finally, in states where the children's health advocates are leading the fight to protect CHIP, there is work as leaders to determine how to tap into existing coalitions around Medicaid and best leverage partners to maximize their talents to drive a CHIP refunding campaign.

- Use the following guide to assess what role advocates and their coalitions can play in support of CHIP refunding. You can find the guide [HERE](#).

Five things that advocates can do to prepare.

As we prepare for CHIP refunding, advocates can begin now to prepare—ranging from a coalition assessment to compiling state specific information and data. The following resource has some tips and key resources advocates need to get ready.

- You can find a list of tips [HERE](#).

Guiding principles to safeguard CHIP.

The current federal landscape is fraught with difficulty as advocates fight on multiple fronts and work to keep coalitions intact and on message. One key strategy to support this effort is agreement on a set of core principles that your coalition can use as a litmus test for proposals. Keep in mind that any discussion and strategy for CHIP must be coordinated with efforts to protect Medicaid. Overarching categories that a coalition could use to build a campaign to protect CHIP might fall into broad buckets: Sustainable Funding; Meaningful and Affordable Coverage; Ongoing Outreach and Enrollment Support; Access to High Quality Care; and Advances Health Equity. Below are some initial resources to begin to construct a principles document:

- Georgetown University Center for Children and Families (CCF) provides a high-level summary of important “asks” [HERE](#).
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provides a principles document [HERE](#).
- [HERE](#) is an example of principles put together by Texas advocates that includes a sign-on form for coalition members.