

## Memorandum on Children's Health Insurance Outreach February 18, 1998

*Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Education, the Commissioner of Social Security*

*Subject:* Children's Health Insurance Outreach

Over 10 million of our Nation's children are currently uninsured and, as a consequence, often cannot afford much-needed health care services such as doctor visits, prescription drugs, or hospital care. Last year, with bipartisan support, we took a major step toward solving this problem. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 that I signed into law enacted the largest single expansion of children's health insurance in 30 years. The new Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides \$24 billion over 5 years to cover millions of uninsured children in working families. It builds on the Medicaid program, which currently covers nearly 20 million poor children across the country.

We now face the serious task of enrolling uninsured children in both Medicaid and State-administered children's health programs. We know that well over 3 million uninsured children are eligible but not enrolled in Medicaid. This is largely due to a lack of knowledge about Medicaid eligibility and the difficulty of the enrollment process. These same problems could limit the potential of CHIP to successfully enroll millions of uninsured children.

To ensure that both Medicaid and CHIP fulfill their potential, I am calling for a nationwide children's health insurance outreach initiative involving both the private and public sectors. As illustrated by my announcement today, foundations, corporations, health care providers, consumer advocates, and others in the private sector are already responding to our challenge to make every effort to enroll uninsured children in Medicaid or CHIP. In the public sector, my FY 1999 budget proposal includes policies to give States the flexibility and funding they need to conduct innovative outreach activities. The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) should continue their focused

efforts to promote outreach through administrative actions.

There is clearly more that the Federal Government can do to help the States and the private sector achieve our mutual goal of targeting and providing coverage to uninsured children. Many children who lack health insurance are the same children who benefit from programs your agency now administers. Eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP is often similar to that for WIC, Food Stamps, Head Start, tax programs, job training, welfare to work, Social Security, public housing, and homelessness initiatives. Thus, a coordinated Federal interagency effort is critical to providing greater health care coverage for children.

Therefore, to increase enrollment of uninsured children in Medicaid and CHIP, I hereby direct you to take the following actions consistent with the mission of your agency. First, I direct you to identify all of the employees and grantees of your agency's programs who work with low-income, uninsured children who may be eligible for Medicaid or CHIP.

Second, I direct you to develop and implement an educational strategy aimed at ensuring that your agency's employees and grantees are fully informed about the availability of Medicaid and CHIP to our Nation's children.

Third, I direct you to develop an agency-specific plan as part of our Administration-wide, intensive children's health insurance outreach effort. Your agency's plan should include distributing information and educating families about their options; coordinating toll-free numbers and other sources of information on public programs; simplifying, coordinating, and, where possible, unifying the application process for related public programs; and working with State and local agencies on broadening the locations where families can apply for Medicaid and/or CHIP.

Fourth, I direct you to identify any statutory or regulatory impediments in your programs to conducting children's health insurance coverage outreach.

Finally, I direct the Department of Health and Human Services to serve as the coordinating agency to assist in the development and integration of agency plans and to report back to me

on each agency's plan in 90 days with recommendations and a suggested implementation timetable. In so doing, I direct the Department to ensure that Federal interagency activities are

complementary, aggressive, and consistent with the overall initiative to cover uninsured children.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

## Remarks at a Reception for Representative James P. Moran *February 18, 1998*

Thank you very much. First let me join, I know, all of you in thanking Dr. D'Orta for opening this beautiful, beautiful house to us tonight. It's especially nice for me to come back here because I was involved for a long time with Pamela Harriman and with her late husband, Governor Averell Harriman, and their good friend and former great support, Janet Howard, is here tonight. My mind has been reliving a lot of precious memories in this wonderful home.

I'm also grateful to Dr. D'Orta for helping Jim Moran, who is one of the finest people I have ever known in public life. I'm here for him tonight for a lot of reasons, but if you think back to where our country was in 1992, when I was running for President—that the economy was weak, that we were growing apart economically, that our social problems were getting more severe, that our steps seemed more and more uncertain—and you look at where we are today, I can tell you without reservation that one of the reasons we're where we are today is that at very critical junctures, Jim Moran was always willing to stand in the breach and do what was right for our country.

In 1993, we passed our economic program to bring the deficit down by only one vote in the House. If Jim Moran had taken the easy way out, if he'd said, "Well, there are a lot of people in my district who will attack me over this," we wouldn't be here tonight having this celebration. Just Jim Moran could have walked away and changed the future of the country. But because he didn't walk away, before we saved the first dollar from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the deficit had been reduced from \$295 billion a year to \$22 billion a year, over 90 percent. That alone should get Jim Moran reelected for the rest of his life if he wants it.

When we passed the Brady bill and the crime bill to put 100,000 police on the street and ban assault weapons, the people in the NRA and their allies actually defeated a number of our Congressmen in the '94 election by terrifying people and saying we were taking their guns away. But Jim Moran stood in the breach. We didn't win by many votes on the crime bill, and 5 years later, as we've now put over two-thirds of those police on the street and taken a lot of the assault weapons off the street, hundreds of thousands of people with criminal records or adverse mental health histories have not been able to buy handguns because of the Brady bill. This is a safer country. Crime has gone down for 5 years in a row in all major categories.

In 1994, when the other party won the House and proclaimed that they had a revolutionary contract—we Democrats said, on America—[laughter]—and they were prepared to shut the Government down to try to force me to accept that contract, the only way we were able to reverse it was that there were enough hearty souls in the Congress who said, "Wait a minute. There's something wrong with this picture. We are reducing the deficit. We're going to balance the budget, but we don't have to give up on our commitment on education or our commitment to the environment or our commitment to health care or our commitment to senior citizens or our commitment to trying to expand the circle of economic opportunity to the people who haven't felt anything in this recovery yet." And we said no.

And in the face of the shutdown we defeated the contract on America, thanks to Jim Moran and the people like him who stood with me. If they hadn't done it, I could not have done it alone. So Jim Moran has done a lot of good things.