



## News Release

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### **CHIP Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

*Governor Huntsman, Senator Hatch among those praising CHIP*

(Salt Lake City, UT) –Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday today, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) has played a key role in providing coverage to uninsured, low-income children for the past decade. Covering Utah kids with good, affordable health insurance has been a top priority for present and past government officials.

"In 1997, I authored the State Children's Health Insurance Program in the U.S. Senate and I consider it to be one of my most important legislative accomplishments," said U. S. Senator Orrin Hatch. "For over a decade, the CHIP program has played a significant role in Utah in providing lower-income children with the medical care they need for a healthier future."

"I enthusiastically recognize and applaud the work that has been done over the past 10 years to make CHIP possible," said Utah Governor Jon Huntsman. "We have made great strides in improving access to health care for our vulnerable children."

Since inception, CHIP has insured 134,735 children and current enrollment stands at 34,588. Through the years, CHIP has faced open and closed enrollment periods due to funding restraints. In one of the biggest changes since its launch, lawmakers passed House Bill 326, which mandates that CHIP remain continuously open for all eligible children.

"CHIP is a program that works," said bill sponsor and Speaker of the House Greg Curtis, as a group of 25 children from a local Boys and Girls Club sang "Happy Birthday" and displayed cards they created to celebrate CHIP’s birthday.

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CHIP rescues families in time of need. Tanya Campbell's four children were one of the program's first families when they enrolled in 1999. Like many other self-employed Utahns, employer-sponsored insurance was not available to Tanya and private insurance plans were too expensive. "I am thankful CHIP was there to help us out," said Campbell.

Campbell is now a full-time teacher and has coverage for her family through their school district. "Having my kids on CHIP and then being able to have coverage through my job was like having a safety net while walking on a wire between poles."

Governor Huntsman appealed to parents, "If your children do not have health insurance, I encourage you to call today and see if you qualify for CHIP."

CHIP is funded jointly by the federal and state governments. To receive CHIP, children must qualify based on family size and household income. For example, a family of four earning up to \$42,400 a year may be eligible. In addition, children must be younger than 19, U.S. citizens or legal residents, and not currently covered by health insurance.

Families can apply online, have an application mailed to them, or apply in person at any local eligibility office across Utah. Once enrolled, families may be required to pay premiums of up to \$60 every three months. Premiums and co-pays for services make it possible for CHIP to insure more children.

For more information or to apply for CHIP visit <http://www.health.utah.gov/chip/> or call 1-877-KIDS-NOW.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*