

SCHIP Veto Override in House Unsuccessful

New SCHIP Legislation Expected within Next Two Weeks

October 22 - The U.S. House of Representatives voted on October 18 to override President Bush's veto of legislation to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was unsuccessful. The House fell 13 votes shy of the two-thirds majority needed to override the veto issued by the President after the bill passed both the House and Senate in late-September.

ADHA joined the American Dental Association, American Nurses Association, and nearly every other major health care organization in the country to support the SCHIP reauthorization effort. SCHIP has been providing health care coverage to children from families that are unable to afford private health insurance but do not qualify for Medicaid for over ten years. The program must be reauthorized with additional funding in order to continue providing coverage.

The House and Senate reached a bipartisan compromise on SCHIP legislation in late-September which reauthorized the program with \$35 million in new funding over five years. Funding for the program would have been generated by a 61-cent increase in the federal cigarette tax. The legislation included provisions to require states to offer dental benefits as a part of SCHIP, a benefit that is currently optional, and make oral health care resources and information more accessible. The bill also included language instructing the General Accounting Office to study the appropriateness and feasibility of using a mid-level oral health provider to work in collaboration with dentists.

President Bush's decision to veto the SCHIP legislation was disappointing, as the bill had broad support among American citizens, state governors, and members of congress. Hundreds of ADHA members took the time to send letters and make calls to legislators urging support for SCHIP. In spite of the veto setback, the House plans to take up a new SCHIP reauthorization by early November. ADHA President Jean Connor, RDH, noted, "ADHA members and staff will continue to advocate in support of SCHIP legislation that extends much-needed care to millions of eligible children and includes a requirement for dental benefits under the program."

ADHA will continue to update members about SCHIP reauthorization efforts through e-mails and web updates. If you do not currently receive e-mails from ADHA, visit the [Members](#) section of the website and enter your e-mail contact information.