



October 4, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

Thank you for your commitment to children's health. As the Committee prepares to markup S. 1827, the "Keeping Kids' Insurance Dependable and Secure (KIDS) Act," the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) welcomes the opportunity to share our thoughts with you.

HLC is a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare. It is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century health system that makes affordable, high quality care accessible for all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors, pharmacies, post-acute care providers, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare through a patient-centered approach.

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is a critical part of our nation's healthcare infrastructure. This program supports some of our most vulnerable citizens – children from families with low and moderate incomes. CHIP has provided coverage and encouraged participation by simplifying the enrollment and renewal process. Along with other factors, this has led to a steep decline in the percentage of children without insurance from around 14% in 1997 to 5% in 2016. Children from racial and ethnic minorities or who have special healthcare needs are especially likely to rely on CHIP.

HLC believes that keeping children healthy by giving them access to care is essential to the wellbeing of our society. Diagnosing and treating problems at an early age increases the likelihood that children will grow into healthy adults. This care will also save costs, as they will be more able to work and contribute to our nation's economy in the future. Without CHIP coverage, however, many children will have to go without necessary doctor visits, prescriptions, or other healthcare services. They will not be

able to access preventive care and instead will likely be treated in emergency rooms and other high-cost settings.

S. 1827 would reauthorize CHIP for five years. HLC is proud to support this legislation, and urges Congress to pass it quickly so that states do not face funding uncertainty and children do not lose coverage.

Thank you for your work on this important issue. HLC looks forward to continuing to work with you. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Debbie Witchev at (202) 449-3435.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary R. Greal".

Mary R. Greal
President