

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**For Immediate Release:** September 20, 2007

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## **The countdown is on - at risk is our kids**

Ninety-eight thousand kids in Bexar County have no idea how a decision to be made in the next 10 days in Washington D.C. could dramatically impact their health - and their lives. That's why a local coalition - Voices for Children - is speaking up on their behalf.

**What:** State and local leaders and children's advocates urge Congress and the White House to support the reauthorization and expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) before the program expires on September 30, 2007.

**When:** Friday, September 21, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

**Where:** SKYROOM at the International Conference Centers, University of the Incarnate Word (the Skyroom is located above the parking garage)

**Who:** Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff  
George Hernandez, University Health System  
Pilar Oates, Executive Director of Methodist Healthcare Ministries  
Representatives from the Bexar County Delegation  
Parent of child receiving CHIP Benefits

**Questions & Answers followed immediately after.**

### **Background on the Issue in Texas:**

- CHIP was enacted with strong bipartisan support during the 1997 Congress. The 10-year-old program will expire on September 30 and more than 6 million low-income children are at risk of losing their benefits.
- Today in Texas 327,379 children are enrolled in the SCHIP program. The proposed reauthorization would allow for an additional 134,000 children to participate in the program.
- In Texas, there are 1.4 Million uninsured children, and approximately two-thirds of them are currently eligible for CHIP or Medicaid. In Bexar County 98,000 children are uninsured. Bexar County enrollment makes up 7% of the CHIP enrollment – so an additional 7,000 children in Bexar County could be enrolled in SCHIP.
- State funds that are spent on Medicaid and SCHIP are matched by the federal government. The federal government gives Texas \$2.64 for each dollar the state spends on CHIP.

### **Background of Voices for Children's 9<sup>th</sup> annual Congress**

At the first Children's Congress in 1998 local advocates urged Texas leadership to pass the first CHIP bill with three principles. (1) Keep the enrollment process simple for families; (2) Provide a one year eligibility period; (3) The success of CHIP is vital to Texas and today children's advocates are continuing to make a difference in being a voice for Texas children.

**Sponsored By:** *Voices for Children of San Antonio and United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, and University Health System*