

# Massachusetts Children's Health Access Coalition

PRESS RELEASE

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## Coalition Urges Legislature to Save Children's Medical Security Plan

Today the Children's Health Access Coalition released a report, *Small Savings, Big Losses: Cutting the Children's Medical Security Plan, Undoing Children's Health in Massachusetts*. Governor Mitt Romney proposes to eliminate many benefits in the Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) while sharply raising premiums. The report details the devastating impact the Governor's proposed cuts would have on children's health in Massachusetts. The report urges the Legislature to reject Governor Romney's proposals and to fully fund CMSP.

Nearly 4000 children are on the waitlist for CMSP, since the state capped enrollment in November 2002. Previously all Massachusetts children were eligible for some type of health insurance, regardless of income. The Children's Medical Security Plan covered many children who had no other access to health insurance. Governor Romney's new budget proposal would eliminate CMSP dental, eyeglasses, radiology, and outpatient surgery, and raise premiums to prohibitively expensive levels. If approved by the Legislature, this would reduce CMSP enrollment by 4000 children – by the administration's own estimate.

"Massachusetts is retreating dangerously from its commitment to health care access for every child," said Allison Staton, Coordinator of the Children's Health Access Coalition and Manager of the Statewide Division at Health Care For All.

"CMSP has been a critical resource for children," said Barbara Ferrer, PhD, Deputy Director of the Boston Public Health Commission and former CMSP administrator. "Without this program, we'll see more emergency room visits, more asthma attacks, and *less* immunization and less annual exams for kids."

"My three children rely on the Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP) for health insurance," said Patricia Quinn of Roslindale. "Family health coverage through my employer would cost us more than \$500 per month, which we cannot possibly afford at our income level. My daughter has asthma and allergies, and regular visits to our pediatrician have kept us out of the emergency room many times. Without CMSP, I am sad to say that I could not afford to provide my children with the health care they need."

According to Sean Palfrey, MD, President of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, "The costs to the state and its health care system are far greater when people do not get preventive and primary care such as asthma treatment, vaccines, and other drugs. It is foolish both health-wise and fiscally to cut CMSP."

To access the full report, visit: [www.hcfama.org/acrobat/childhealth\\_report.pdf](http://www.hcfama.org/acrobat/childhealth_report.pdf).

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