



CHILD DEFENDER - NEW YORK

A Call to Action from the Children's Defense Fund - New York
March 24, 2006

LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

Help Medically Fragile Children Get The Care They Need!

For medically fragile children in New York, home nursing care is an empty promise. The current low Medicaid reimbursement rate for home nursing services prevents these young patients from leaving costly institutionalized care and returning to their families.

Right now, a bill before the State Assembly and Senate would increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for home nursing services for medically fragile children and extend case management services to help families bring their children home. **And, it will not cost anything.**

Research has shown again and again that home care reduces healthcare costs, as patients in home care can leave expensive institutions and require fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

CALL TO ACTION!

Call New York State **Assemblyman Gottfried** (518-455-4941) and **State Senator Hannon** (518-455-2200). Tell them to support A.9726/S.6606 and remind them that in a budget that gives so much to institutions, this is something that we can and must do for vulnerable children. It will not cost the state ANY money.

As the budget battle draws to a close, members are being bombarded with pleas for funding and support. Don't let these young patients get lost in the shuffle: keep the pressure on!

IT'S YOUR MONEY. YOU EARNED IT. NOW CLAIM IT!

There Are THREE More Weeks Left! It's not too late to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). To find out where to go for free tax preparation, call 311 or the IRS at 1 (800) 829-1040. For more information, outreach materials or to schedule an EITC training call CDF-NY at (212) 697-2323.

Support Humane Immigration Reform!

The federal Senate Judiciary Committee is considering a bill that would make undocumented immigrants and anyone who aids them criminals. At the same time, this bill does nothing to help undocumented immigrants seeking legalization. A second bill introduced in the Senate last week mirrors stringent border security measures passed by the House of Representatives.

These bills would make undocumented immigrants criminals and security threats, even as our nation benefits economically from their work in vital industries. We offer them no protection from exploitation by employers at the same time that we profit from their labor and taxes. In aggressively targeting those who help undocumented workers, these proposals will also criminalize the aid given by clergy, doctors, nursery school teachers and social workers. Even a small act of kindness, such as offering a meal or first aid, will be a crime.

Another proposal in Congress, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration bill, offers more comprehensive reform that will better protect the human rights of immigrants. Join us in support of immigration system reform that replaces illegal status and illegal immigration with legal status and legal channels for migration. Momentum is building around this issue and your voice needs to be heard!

CALL TO ACTION!

In recent weeks, tens of thousands across the country have rallied in anticipation of these crucial votes. Two events in New York City and Washington, DC will send the message to decision-makers to respect immigrant rights. Call your elected officials and insist on a more humane immigration reforms.

On Saturday, March 25th, Families for Freedom will hold a vigil for children affected by their parent's deportation or detention. They will meet at 26 Federal Plaza from 11:45 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. For more information, contact Prince Brown or Rafaela Lozano at (718) 858-9658 x 204.

(Continued on Next Page...)

On Monday, March 27th, religious, labor and community leaders will gather on the West Lawn of the White House at 11:00 a.m., followed by meetings with representatives to urge protection of immigrant rights. For more information, please call Avidah Moussavian at (212) 627-2227 x244.

2006 Campaign for Summer Jobs Youth Action Day A Success!

Arriving at the height of State budget negotiations on March 21st, nearly 350 teens visited Albany to urge the Governor and State legislators to include \$35 million for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in the 2006-07 State budget. Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and several of their colleagues addressed the teens, and 15 young people spoke to their peers about the importance of summer jobs at the morning youth speak-out and rally. In the afternoon, the teens attended nearly 130 meetings with State legislators to make the case for \$35 million. *The Campaign for Summer Jobs is co-chaired by United Neighborhood Houses and the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition.*

Juvenile Justice Conference: "Youth United"

Where: Countee Cullen Community Center, 242 West 144th Street, between 7th and 8th Avenues

When: Friday, April 7, 2006

What: Presented by *Students Taking Action Towards Empowerment*. Do you want to learn what to do if you are stopped by the police? Do you want to know why so many young people in your community are getting locked up? Do you want to talk to other youth about how to make changes in your neighborhood? Contact Joselina Fay at (212) 876-5500 or joselinafay@gmail.com for more information or to attend the event.

Uninsured Kids in New York

New York has made enormous progress in recent years in expanding the availability of public health insurance for children and families. Through increased eligibility and a range of enrollment and renewal simplifications, system improvements and the implementation of community-based facilitated enrollment, New York has created a more effective health insurance system for children and working families. Yet despite these gains, nearly half a million children in New York remain uninsured.

Who are the Uninsured Children in New York? There are 469,000 uninsured children and teens living in New York. Nearly 10 percent of all children living in New York are uninsured. The vast majority are U.S. citizens, school-aged and living in working households with incomes below \$50,000 a year for a family of three. More than 40 percent of New York's uninsured children live outside of New York City. More

than 70 percent of New York's uninsured children and teens are currently eligible for health insurance, but are not enrolled.

Why is Health Insurance so Important? Health insurance coverage translates into better care and healthier families and is fundamental to ensuring children's access to necessary and appropriate health services including primary and preventive care. Research shows that uninsured children in New York are more than four times as likely as those with public health insurance to lack a regular source of health care or to have an unmet need for prescription medications. Children in poor health are more likely to have poor social and economic outcomes and even shorter life expectancies.

What Can Be Done? Of New York's 469,000 uninsured children, only an estimated 150,000 children and teens are not currently eligible for subsidized health insurance coverage. Through a combination of expanding eligibility, making New York's buy-in program more affordable and increasing enrollment opportunities we can provide vital health care coverage to *all* of New York's uninsured children. Expanding eligibility for children's health insurance is just the first step. New York must also simplify and streamline its enrollment and renewal procedures in order to reach the more than 70 percent of children who are eligible but not enrolled and to make it easier for families to maintain their coverage.

Contact us at (212) 697-2323 or www.cdfny.org to see how you can help give every child in New York a healthy start in life.

CDF Opportunity: Become an Emerging Leader

CDF is seeking applications from youth advocates from across the country to become *Emerging Leaders*. The *CDF Emerging Leaders Project* fosters the growth of a vibrant community of early care and education activists and depends on a commitment to peer-to-peer learning and support. Each year, a new class of *Emerging Leaders* is selected to attend two retreats held at CDF's Haley Farm in Clinton, TN: The Fall and Spring Institutes. CDF covers the cost of travel, lodging and meals for all participants in the Fall Institute, and scholarships are also available for the spring. **Application packets must be postmarked by April 17, 2006.** Visit www.childrensdefense.org to download an application. For more information, contact Della Hoffman at (202) 662-3509 or dhoffman@childrensdefense.org.

SAVE THE DATE

March for Peace, Justice and Democracy

When: Saturday, April 29, 2006

Where: New York City (More Info TBA)

What: Join with progressives from women's rights organizations, the peace movement, environmental groups, civil rights, labor and religious communities for a march sponsored by the National Organization for Women. Additional information will be posted as it's available at www.now.org/nyc2006.