

ACP

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*

October 5, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The American College of Physicians, the nation's largest medical specialty organization representing 124,000 internal medicine physicians and medical students, is greatly disappointed in your veto of the bipartisan legislation to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). We respectfully request that you reconsider your decision and sign this legislation into law when it returns to your desk should an attempt to override your veto be unsuccessful.

This carefully-crafted House-Senate compromise is targeted at continuing to protect the nation's poorest of children whose parents are unable to afford health insurance on their own. If SCHIP is not reauthorized, millions of children will be denied basic health care needs to give a child a healthy and successful start in life. We disagree with your view of this legislation as an expansion of government-run insurance. Rather, SCHIP is a public-private partnership where nearly 70 percent of children already receive coverage through private insurers and this legislation will expand private insurance even further.

Further, we strongly support the provisions to increase federal taxes on tobacco products as a principal means of funding the program. Raising tobacco taxes to provide coverage for the 6.6 million children currently enrolled in SCHIP and cover an additional 4 million children not only makes for good budget policy – but good health care policy—since higher taxes on tobacco have proven to reduce the number of children and adolescents who start smoking and reduce long-term costs associated with smoking-related illnesses.

We are asking Congress to override your veto. In the unfortunate event that the veto is sustained, we will continue to urge Congress to again pass a bill that provides comparable levels of coverage and necessary increases in tobacco taxes. We hope that you will sign such a bill into law when it returns to your desk.

Sincerely,



David C. Dale, MD, FACP
President