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CONTACT: Antoinette Powell
aroach_powell@dckids.org
Cell: (202) 723-8211

New Federal Law Will Reverse Medicaid Gains for Children in DC

WASHINGTON, June 30, 2006--DC Action for Children says children, youth and their families in the city will be adversely affected by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which requires states and the District to obtain proof of citizenship from all new Medicaid applicants and from current beneficiaries once their annual reviews approach. This new law will go in effect on tomorrow—July 1.

Angela Jones Hackley, executive director of DC ACT said today, “Requiring birth certificates to enroll in Medicaid is one of the worst public policy shifts in my time as a child advocate. The District of Columbia has made great strides to dramatically increase the number of children who have public health insurance – to more than 80% – and this federal action will have serious and debilitating effects for the city’s most vulnerable residents.”

DC ACT has been integrally involved in helping the city develop forward-thinking and progressive policies such as mail-in and phone-in applications, a shortened application for DC Healthy Families and the expansion of Medicaid to families with incomes up to 300% of the federal poverty level. DC ACT is concerned about the effects of this change, specifically the financial burden facing families with multiple children, as official birth certificates may be out of the reach of many.

Jones Hackley went on further to say, “This federal law may turn back some of the progress we have made under the Medicaid over the past six years. The Congress may be forcing children and families back into a situation of being uninsured, thereby limiting access is limited to a disjointed health system of free clinics and emergency rooms. They should be ashamed.”

ABOUT DC ACT

Since its inception in 1992, DC Action for Children has served as an independent, non-profit, multi-issue advocacy organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children living in the District of Columbia. DC ACT's work is guided by its vision that each child in the District of Columbia should be afforded the opportunity to reach his or her potential. DC ACT focuses on public policy areas, which include: early care and education, child welfare, child and maternal health and positive youth development. For more information, visit www.dckids.org.

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