October 5, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I urge you to take swift action in support of continued funding for the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which expired on October 1st. CHIP provides coverage to nearly 9 million low-income children and 370,000 pregnant women across the country and has been a reliable source of coverage for working families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to afford private health insurance.

We applaud the Senate Finance and House Energy and Commerce Committees for approving legislation (S.1827 and H.R.3921) to extend CHIP funding for an additional five years—thru FY 2022—and urge the full House and Senate to follow suit. We also recommend the inclusion of a two-year delay in funding cuts to the Medicaid DSH program, which supports hospitals in providing necessary care to low-income and uninsured children, families and individuals, in a final bill.

As children are among the most vulnerable members of our society, their well-being through access to health care should be our first priority. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, 95 percent of children in the U.S. now have health coverage and these incredible gains in coverage are in part because of CHIP's role in covering millions of children. It is essential that Congress continues to fund CHIP in order to maintain our national investment in children's health.

We have made a profound difference in the lives of children but we must act now to preserve and continue that success by extending funding for the CHIP program.

Sincerely,

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO