

August 5, 2005

**THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE UNITED STATES

The Honorable John F. Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, I would like to express our support for S 114, the "Kids Come First Act of 2005."

CHA is committed to health care for all, and believes expanding coverage to uninsured children is a critical step toward this goal. We believe this legislation will be instrumental in reducing the number of uninsured individuals in our nation by introducing a plan that increases federal funding to states in exchange for state expansions of Medicaid and SCHIP coverage of children; creating tax incentives for families to purchase coverage for their children; and eliminating enrollment barriers in Medicaid and SCHIP.

Currently, there are nearly 9 million uninsured children living in the United States. CHA has long advocated the expansion of publicly-funded health insurance programs like Medicaid and SCHIP as a way to address the plight of this large and vulnerable population. CHA also supports private sector initiatives that would provide financial assistance to families so they can purchase coverage either through the workplace or outside the workplace. The "Kids Come First Act of 2005" offers a plan that encompasses both elements of these two strategies for expanded health care coverage and would serve as a means of providing health insurance coverage to all children in the United States. This legislation will surely make a positive difference in the lives of many families by ensuring the health and well-being of their children.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Michael Rodgers
Interim President and CEO

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