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ISSUE UPDATE

DATE: February 6, 2009
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau



NAACP–Supported Children’s Health Care Coverage Expansion Legislation is Signed into Law

***LEGISLATION IS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO BILLS VETOED BY
PRESIDENT BUSH IN 2007***

THE ISSUE

On Wednesday, February 4, 2009 President Obama signed a major expansion of health care insurance for low- and moderate-income children into law. Specifically, the new law will expand the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to cover an additional 4.1 million American children, bringing the total to 11 million nationwide. President Bush had twice vetoed almost identical legislation in 2007. An expansion of the SCHIP program has been a legislative priority for the NAACP for several years.

Specifically, the legislation will allow states to provide dental insurance to children, covers pregnant women, raises the family income eligibility (thus allowing more low- and moderate-income families to qualify), calls for less stringent identification requirements and will allow children of legal immigrants to be covered. The cost of the coverage increases will be paid for by an increase in the federal cigarette tax.

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