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UNITED WAYS OF CALIFORNIA REACTS TO GOVERNOR BROWN'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

Cost Increases in Children's Health Programs Could Jeopardize Access to Healthcare for More than 120,000 Children

Los Angeles, CA – **Peter Manzo, President & CEO of the United Ways of California**, issued the following statement today in response to Governor Jerry Brown's budget proposal relating to children's health and education. The budget proposal would increase premiums for more than half a million children enrolled in the State's Healthy Families program, would significantly increase co-pays for emergency room visits, hospital stays and prescription drug coverage for children enrolled in Healthy Families and Medi-Cal, and would eliminate vision benefits for children under Healthy Families. The Governor's budget largely preserves K-12 education funding at existing levels.

"We appreciate the difficult choices facing this Administration and the Legislature to finally bring our budget into balance," said Manzo. "But these proposals will result in more than 120,000 children effectively losing access to health coverage. United Ways of California believes the State can and must take all steps to protect our most vulnerable, the children of California, particularly in the middle of a recession. Faced with premium increases, the evidence shows that too many families will forgo health coverage for their children, meaning children won't get the preventive care they need to keep them healthy. This has broader impact than just wellness; children need to be healthy in order to learn. In addition, taxpayers and employers will carry a heavier burden, as uninsured children receive more costly care in emergency rooms and manageable health problems may become more serious and more expensive to cure."

"At the same time, we appreciate that the Governor has done all he can to protect K-12 education in his proposed budget. United Ways of California will work with the Governor and Legislature to pass a final budget that protects our children."

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