



MIDLANDS & UPSTATE • 803-779-4875
4500 Fort Jackson Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29209

LOWCOUNTRY • 843-577-4122
1031 Chuck Dawley Blvd., Suite Five
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

PEE DEE & MYRTLE BEACH • 843-423-0777
Post Office Box 890
Marion, SC 29571

www.palmettoproject.org
www.schealthcare.org

For release: September 3, 2010

Contact: Steve Skardon, Shelli Quenga (843-577-4122)

More than 110,000 S.C. Children are Eligible, but not Enrolled in State Health Insurance, according to the Palmetto Project; Toll-Free Call Center Available Now to Help Parents Apply

More than 110,000 South Carolina children are eligible, but not enrolled in the state's health insurance programs, according to the non-profit Palmetto Project. Echoing comments by the U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services today, the organization said that most of these children are uninsured because their parents simply do not know they are eligible or that the programs are free with no monthly premiums, co-pays, or deductibles for children.

"These are mostly children of working parents whose employers either don't offer health insurance or what is offered is unaffordable," said Executive Director Steve Skardon. "Often their parents work more than one job, and they certainly don't get paid when they stay home to take care of sick kids."

The 25-year-old Palmetto Project is spearheading a statewide campaign to enroll all the state's eligible children in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), thereby ensuring children have a medical home. "Medical care for a child with health insurance is far less costly than for one who is uninsured. It's common sense. We can either insure these kids now, or continue to pay a much higher price in emergency room care, missed school days, lost wages, and reduced productivity," Skardon said.

Shelli Quenga, director of the campaign, said that both programs are underwritten by a combination of state and Federal funds. Any child under 19 in a household with an income below 200 percent of poverty is eligible. She also said the organization has set up a statewide toll-free call center with trained family resource specialists to answer questions about eligibility and assist parents in completing applications for their children. **Families can call toll-free 1-888-998-4646 or visit www.ChildrensHealthSC.org.**