



October 31, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Minority Whip  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader McCarthy, Minority Leader Pelosi and Minority Whip Hoyer:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation, I urge you to enact a long-term funding extension for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) immediately, as the current funding has already expired. CHIP is an important program that has been successful at providing health insurance for 8.9 million children nationwide, and it must be reauthorized promptly to ensure that coverage for current beneficiaries is not interrupted.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health association that speaks on behalf of at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures, including 470,000 children. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lives.

CHIP is a critical source of health insurance, providing high-quality coverage to children in families that earn too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid, but too little to afford other health insurance. In some states, CHIP and Medicaid programs are combined to expand Medicaid benefits to CHIP-eligible children. More than one million people with epilepsy depend on Medicaid or CHIP for access to affordable health care.

When CHIP was first established in 1997, nearly 15 percent of America's children were uninsured. Today, the percentage of children without insurance is less than 5 percent – a remarkable reduction that can largely be credited to CHIP. For the families that depend on CHIP, there are no other affordable options for health insurance. If Congress does not pass a funding extension for CHIP, the Medicaid and Chip Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) estimates that 1.2 million children will become uninsured. For children with epilepsy and other medical conditions who depend on reliable access to care, losing CHIP coverage could be life-threatening.

Without a CHIP funding extension, all states will exhaust federal CHIP funds by spring 2018. Many states are currently in the process of preparing Fiscal Year 2018 budgets and will begin enrollment freezes and coverage reductions without a guarantee of CHIP funding.

CHIP was enacted in 1997 with strong bipartisan support. The Epilepsy Foundation hopes that this year's funding extension can be another opportunity for bipartisan agreement. We urge you to support prompt reauthorization of CHIP. Passing an extension now is critical to ensure that no child goes without medical care because of legislative delays. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Angela Ostrom, Chief Legal Officer & Vice President Public Policy, at [aostrom@efa.org](mailto:aostrom@efa.org) or 301-918-3766.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil M Gattone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil Gattone, M.Ed.  
President & CEO  
Epilepsy Foundation