

SUPPORT CONTINUOUS HEALTH COVERAGE FOR KIDS

U.S. Representative
KATHY CASTOR



CONTINUOUS ELIGIBILITY IMPROVES OUTCOMES, LOWERS COSTS & HELPS FAMILIES

Continuous eligibility (CE) requires states to cover children in CHIP and Medicaid for a defined period of time without interruption, regardless of changes in circumstances.

Consistent health coverage is critical to children's development and well-being, especially in their early years, allowing them to grow into healthy, productive adults.

Positive effects of health coverage include early detection of conditions through routine and comprehensive care, less chronic disease in adulthood, increased graduation rates, and reductions in mortality, emergency care usage, and avoidable hospitalizations.

According to the CBO, an additional year of childhood coverage would improve labor outcomes in adulthood (higher future earnings and more productivity), which increases the return on investment, boosts the GDP, and has positive long-term fiscal effects.

Not only does CE improve short- and long-term health outcomes, **it reduces churn and financial barriers to care, promotes health equity and lowers costs.**

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

There are **38 million children** enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP nationally. During the Medicaid "unwinding," nearly **5 million children** lost their health coverage, a 10% national decline. Many were disenrolled due to procedural or administrative reasons like missing paperwork, not because they were no longer eligible. Nearly **600,000 kids** lost coverage in Florida.

Through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Congress **enacted** a 12-month CE period for children under age 19 in Medicaid and CHIP beginning on January 1, 2024. This new policy will benefit **more than 17 million eligible children** in states that didn't previously have a 12-month CE policy. **But we can do better.**

KEEP KIDS COVERED ACT

Representatives Kathy Castor (FL-14) and Yadira Caraveo (CO-08) lead the Keep Kids Covered Act, a bill to provide multi-year CE for eligible children in Medicaid and CHIP until age 6, with 24-month CE for eligible children until age 19.

The effort is supported by leading child and family health advocacy **organizations**, and the Biden-Harris Administration has proposed a similar effort.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Future.