



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN LAUDS HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY ACT
AS CRITICAL STEP TOWARD INSURING COLORADO KIDS AND FAMILIES**

Today, Governor Bill Ritter signed the Colorado Health Care Affordability Act, House Bill 09-1293, which will provide health insurance coverage to more than 100,000 Coloradans, including about 21,000 children.

"More children live in poverty than ever before in Colorado, and our state ranks last in the nation in the percent of children living in poverty who are covered by health insurance. This legislation is crucial to turning these trends around and for providing more families with access to the care they need," said Megan Ferland, President, Colorado Children's Campaign. "We applaud the Governor's commitment to ultimately ensuring that all Colorado kids have health insurance."

The Colorado Healthcare Affordability Act will allow the state to generate \$600 million a year through a hospital provider fee and draw down \$600 million in federal matching funds. The combined \$1.2 billion will support Medicaid and the Child Health Plan Plus eligibility continuations and expansions.

"When coverage is expanded for both children and adults, there are benefits for families and our economy," said Ferland. "Healthy parents are more able to make healthy choices for their children."

"The economic downturn has left more and more Coloradans wondering if a child's illness will lead to bankruptcy," said Ferland. "The Health Care Affordability Act offers families at risk two things they badly need: a chance to stay healthy and a shot at economic stability – at no additional cost to taxpayers."

Ferland said the legislation will also provide more continuous coverage for children who previously were on and off programs due to eligibility restrictions.

"It is not enough to ensure that children are able to access coverage if their coverage is disrupted repeatedly," said Ferland. "With the average length of coverage previously standing at between seven and nine months on these programs, children are clearly not getting the kind of sustained coverage that we know is basic to their health."

The Colorado Children's Campaign is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focusing on expanding access to quality health care, K-12 education and early childhood experiences. For more information, please visit www.coloradokids.org.