



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 15, 2015

CONTACT:

Lorraine Gonzalez-Camastra, Director of Health Policy, Children's Defense Fund – NY
(212) 697-2323

**HCFANY praises reauthorization of Children's Health Insurance Program funding,
pledges continued advocacy to protect the program beyond 2017**

(New York, NY) - Yesterday evening, the Senate passed **H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA)**, a bi-partisan legislative package originating in the House of Representatives that reauthorizes funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for two years, through 2017. Leaders of Health Care for All New York (HCFANY) – a coalition of over 170 consumer advocacy groups –and other health advocates in New York State supported a four year reauthorization. HCFANY's Children, Youth and Families Taskforce plans to work with Congress to protect this crucial program beyond 2017. The Taskforce is led by the Children's Defense Fund-NY, the Community Service Society of New York, and the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.

"Passage of this legislation is a promising initial step in ensuring that a vital program offering comprehensive health insurance benefits to 8 million children nationally remains," said Melanie Hartzog, Executive Director of the Children's Defense Fund-NY, "However, we can do better by guaranteeing this lifeline program for children continues beyond the current two year reauthorization period. We look forward to continuing to advocate for CHIP to endure in the years ahead."

Since 1997, CHIP has provided affordable health coverage for low-income children and pregnant women who do not qualify for Medicaid, offering them the chance at better, healthier futures. Along with Medicaid, CHIP has successfully reduced un-insurance among children in the United States by half. In New York State, CHIP affords 490,000 children the opportunity to receive free or low-cost health insurance, in turn, providing access to primary, specialty, ancillary, and urgent health care. New York State has been a national innovator and leader in administering its CHIP program, allowing families earning up to 400% of the federal poverty level to be income-eligible for program enrollment with government subsidy. This has been a main contributor to New York's hallmark low un-insurance rate of less than 6% for children.

"We thank our congressional leaders, and particularly the NY delegation, for working to protect the health and well-being of children through reauthorization of this critical program," said Kate Breslin, President & CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, "We expect that this two-year extension is the beginning of a longer term solution to protect CHIP and fully fund the program for four more years."

###