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All Kids plan should help all kids

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January 19, 2009

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Re: "Illinois' All Kids health plan fails to reach all kids," News, Jan. 16:

Judith Graham examines an important question: if Illinois' All Kids program is really for all kids, then why do Illinois children in need of health care remain unenrolled? This dilemma serves as a reminder of the need for better outreach about this strong and successful program that has provided comprehensive, quality health care to almost 1.4 million Illinois kids when they need it. All Kids' implementation is a work in progress. The Department of Health Care and Family Services has done a good job of enrolling children; it has simplified the application process and broadened its outreach to include community groups, schools, child care centers, and health clinics in enrollment efforts.

But there's more work to do. Illinois senators can contribute to the program's success in coming weeks: Voting yes for the State Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) bill provides much-needed funds to Illinois to finish the job of insuring all kids in Illinois.

--John Bouman

President, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

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