

★★

75¢

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

THE STATE

Journal Register



THE OLDEST NEWSPAPER IN ILLINOIS™

MONDAY

AUGUST 20, 2007

All Kids program has had desired impact

Dean Olsen's recent article, "Study questions future of All Kids health insurance program," reports on a new study by the Kaiser Commission titled, "A Race to the Top: Illinois's All Kids Initiative." Olsen ignores the positive and complimentary feedback on the All Kids program that comprises the overwhelming majority of the report. Instead, Olsen takes one of the few cautionary items in the report and turns it into the headline.

The Kaiser Commission strongly commends Illinois and the governor for adopting the nation's first health-coverage program for all children within a state. It also commends the excellent implementation plan that has resulted in enrollment of more than 50,000 newly eligible children and thousands more who were already eligible but had not yet enrolled. We agree with

the study that it is also important to achieve cost savings and better care through management of chronic health conditions and better primary care.

Illinois is doing those things and there is solid progress, but that progress has been slower than anticipated. The report cautions that Illinois must move ahead with these programs, and the state itself agrees and is moving as quickly as possible. Olsen exaggerates this part of the report and gives the erroneous impression that the All Kids program has a questionable future. Our organizations serve children every day, and we can state categorically that All Kids is excellent policy being implemented well, and it is bringing needed health care to tens of thousand of Illinois children who would not otherwise have it.

*John Bouman
Shriver National Center
on Poverty Law
Stephanie Altman
and Tom Yates
Health and Disability Advocates
Robyn Gabel
Illinois Maternal and
Child Health Coalition
Chicago*