



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Rep. Kind: Prescription for a Healthy Wisconsin

CHAMP Act: Covers More Kids

Third in a Series on the Children's Health & Medicare Protection Act of 2007

Washington, DC – U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), today lauded the passage of the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP Act) as a major step forward in ensuring every child in America is covered by health insurance. The CHAMP Act is before the House today, and Rep. Kind, a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means that has jurisdiction over this bill, supports the measure.

"Wisconsin already is a leader in providing health care coverage for kids, and the CHAMP Act will allow us to do even more," Rep. Kind said. "It is wrong for any child in America to go without the medical care they need, and this bill is a reasonable and affordable way to ensure our kids are taken care of, as SCHIP only spends about \$3.50 a day to cover a child. Not only is this the right thing to do for our kids, expanding coverage will promote preventive care, and lower the cost of health insurance for everyone."

The CHAMP Act provides a \$50 billion increase for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). SCHIP allows Wisconsin to fund BadgerCare, the landmark health insurance program for working families, which currently covers nearly 30,000 of Wisconsin's kids. Wisconsin's share of the SCHIP increase is \$29.7 million, securing coverage for those already in the program, providing dental care for kids, and giving the state the opportunity to cover additional kids who qualify but are currently uninsured.

To fund the increase in SCHIP, the bill raises the federal tax on tobacco by 45 cents. Higher cigarette taxes are one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use, especially among children who are more price sensitive than adults. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, a 45-cent increase means that nearly 1.4 million fewer children will take up smoking (a 6.8% decline). Adults would also be less likely to smoke, which means fewer smoking related illnesses and lower health costs – right now total annual public and private health care expenses caused by smoking are \$96.7 billion. A tax increase of 45-cents would lead to long-term health savings of \$32.4 billion; 669,000 fewer smoking-related deaths; and 171,800 fewer smoking-harmed births in the next five years.

"With all the proven adverse health effects of smoking, the more kids we can keep from starting and the more adults we can encourage to quit – the better," Rep. Kind said. "Each pack of cigarettes sold in Wisconsin costs the state nearly \$10 in related health care expenses. Not only is the increase the single most important thing we can do to prevent kids from smoking, it will save lives and save money, and will help provide health care coverage for an additional 5 million kids nationwide."