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The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
232 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
204 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our support for House passage of the CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act. The AMA supports efforts to reauthorize funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for five years as well as the reauthorization of funding for other important programs, including Community Health Centers, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program. The AMA does not support, however, proposed cuts to the Public Health and Prevention Fund (PPHF) and urges continued efforts to identify an alternative offset.

The failure to reauthorize CHIP could negatively impact the health of many of the 9 million low-income children and thousands of pregnant women who rely on this program as well as the finances of their families should they be forced to seek alternative coverage. CHIP addresses a critical gap in health coverage for children in low-income working families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to afford private insurance on their own. By any measure, CHIP has been successful in significantly reducing the number and percentage of children without coverage since its creation two decades ago. Absent reauthorization, a number of states have reported that they are facing imminent shortfalls in CHIP funding. Despite the reallocation of some federal funding to states facing shortfalls, timely reauthorization of CHIP is necessary to ensure stability and enable states to plan and budget for the upcoming year. For these reasons we believe it is urgent that Congress act without delay in reauthorizing funding for CHIP.

While we agree that these programs must be reauthorized as soon as possible, we also wish to express our concern with proposed cuts to the PPHF to help offset the cost of these policies. The AMA House of Delegates, composed of representatives of more than 170 state and national medical specialty organizations, has specifically adopted policies to prevent further cuts to this fund in order to preserve state and local public health functions and activities to prevent disease, and particularly the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of the \$1 billion allocated by the fund for the recently concluded fiscal year, \$891 million was allocated to the CDC for efforts related to diabetes prevention, health care associated infections, heart disease, antibiotic resistance, and other critical public health priorities. In fact, PPHF funding accounts for more than 12 percent of total CDC funding.

We urge that, as this bill moves forward in the legislative process, efforts be made to identify other appropriate policies to support the reauthorization of CHIP, Community Health Centers, NHSC, THCGME, and other important health programs while preserving support for public health infrastructure.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD