

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

Andrea Goodman
National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
Office: 703-838-7505
Cell: 917-701-6853
agoodman@hmhb.org

Text4baby and Connecting Kids to Coverage Team Up to Support American Family Health

Events Nationwide Connect the Two Services to Help Moms Raise Healthier Families

WASHINGTON, DC, February 28, 2012 – The Centers on Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the agency that provides health coverage for more than 43 million children, and the country’s largest mobile health information service announced a partnership today designed to improve access to free and low-cost family health services for mothers and infants. CMS’ Connecting Kids to Coverage initiative and the text4baby program are joining forces in a partnership to drive enrollment in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid, and text4baby, extending the access that American families have to quality healthcare and essential health education.

Roughly ten percent of children in the U.S. are uninsured and 20% of adult women of childbearing age are living without health insurance, meaning that many are missing access to critical health care and health information. These statistics, combined with the fact that the U.S. has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the industrialized world, make clear the need for innovative solutions that better connect families to the tools they need to give their children the best possible start in life. This partnership furthers text4baby’s reach to moms most in need of relevant, timely, and accurate health information while also providing text4baby users with more information about how they can access free and low-cost health coverage for themselves and their children.

“America’s Doctor”, Dr. Regina Benjamin, U. S. Surgeon General, announced the partnership and spoke about its importance. “Text-messaging is a part of the culture in terms of how we communicate,” said Dr. Benjamin. “Using text-messaging to help conduct outreach to families about health coverage for their children is just one more way that the appropriate use of technology is enhancing how we make sure pregnant women and children get the health care they need.”

Dr. Benjamin was joined by CMS Acting Administrator Marilyn Tavenner during an afternoon press call, stating, “The partnership announced today will help encourage eligible mothers and children to enroll in Medicaid and CHIP. Text4baby users will be alerted to the availability of health insurance options, and we are encouraging our partners and other organizations working to help get children enrolled in health coverage to make sure that new moms know how to sign up with text4baby for all kinds of health tips and reminders.”

Text4baby’s Campaign Director, Sarah Ingersoll shared her excitement about the partnership: “With roughly 40% of U.S. births covered by Medicaid, we understand just how critical this partnership is in furthering text4baby’s reach to families who can benefit from getting critical health information in the palm of their hands. We are excited about the possibilities this partnership brings forth in making a real difference in the lives of American families.”

Cindy Mann, CMS Deputy Administrator and Director of the Center for Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Services spoke about the partnership in person at a national press event at Mary’s Center, a national model for comprehensive health care in the nation’s capital. “On the third anniversary of the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, we are providing an important new tool that can help connect mothers and children to affordable coverage,” said Mann. “This new tool is an important vehicle for reaching young mothers.”

In addition to the national event in Washington, DC, community and public health organizations across the country are celebrating Connecting Kids to Coverage & Text4baby Enrollment Day with a series of local events featuring public officials, healthcare workers, and families who have benefited from these services. Activities are taking place today and over the next few weeks in San Diego, CA; Chicago, IL; Newark, NJ; Washington, DC; Lansing, MI; Louisiana; Oklahoma; Florida; and other locations.

Text4baby is the first free national health texting service in the U.S. By simply texting "BABY" (or "BEBE" for information in Spanish) to 511411, women can register to receive weekly text messages, timed to their individual due dates or their baby's birth date throughout their pregnancy and baby’s first year.

The Children’s Health Insurance Program provides free or low-cost health coverage for more than 7 million children up to age 19. CHIP covers U.S. citizens and eligible immigrants. Medicaid provides health coverage to more than 50 million children, families, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Learn more about these programs and state-specific requirements at www.insurekidsnow.gov.

To learn more about how you can be involved in connecting families to health insurance and text4baby, visit <http://text4baby.org/index.php/miscellaneous/188-2012>.

About Text4baby

Text4baby is made possible through a public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor. Founding partners include the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company). U.S. government partners include the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense Military Health System, the Department of Agriculture, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Social Security Administration. The mobile health platform is provided by Voxiva and free messaging services are generously provided by participating wireless carriers.

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