



As pediatricians, public health researchers, and child health and policy experts with the non-partisan organization Children's HealthWatch, we urge members of Congress to ensure sufficient federal funding for programs that provide families necessary resources for becoming and staying healthy. Our research shows that access to food, stable homes, home energy, and affordable health care is vital for young children as they grow. We strongly oppose the proposed cuts and reconciliation instructions for future cuts, to key programs that help families facing economic hardships to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads, afford to keep the heat and lights on, and access to the health care they need.

We are particularly concerned about proposed cuts and changes made by the House Budget Committee to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

SNAP - SNAP is important medicine, like a vaccine.ⁱ Vaccines prevent illness in the immediate and long term and protect the community as a whole. Decades of research, including our own, demonstrates that SNAP is an effective tool for reducing food insecurity and hunger and improving health across the lifespan, beginning during pregnancy and early childhood.^{ii,iii} SNAP is a fundamental component of America's public health and economic infrastructure that supports families when wages are too low or they have a hard time finding work. The structure of SNAP is built to respond when disasters strike or need increases. **Any structural changes or decrease in funding to the program would harm the people it serves, including low-income families, children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities. Changes to the structure that cut to benefits will also result in economic slumps for local communities and families.**

Medicaid – Access to affordable health care is critical for families with children. **Cuts and imposition of work requirements will have harmful effects on young children and their families.** Our research shows that when families struggle to afford necessary medical care and prescription medicine, they are not only unable to achieve optimal health, but they are also more likely to experience other economic hardships.^{iv}

EITC – Research shows the EITC reduces the risk of pre-term births and low birth weight babies, improves children's health, helps children perform better in school, and may even increase life expectancy.^{v,vi,vii} **Reduced funding for the credit and implementation of barriers to accessing the credit will negatively impact the millions of working families across the country.**

We urge Congress to reject these cuts and harmful proposals and pass a budget that supports families with young children. The future of our nation and our economy depends on the healthy growth and development of our nation's youngest children. Passing a budget that promotes opportunity for all children by ensuring adequate nutrition, affordable homes, home energy, and access to health care is critical.

ⁱ Ettinger de Cuba E, Weiss I, Pasquariello J, Schiffmiller A, Frank DA, Coleman S, Breen A, Cook J. The SNAP Vaccine: Boosting Children's Health. Children's HealthWatch, February 2012. Available at: http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/snapvaccine_report_feb12.pdf

ⁱⁱ Almond D, Hoynes HW, Schanzenbach DW. Inside the war on poverty: The impact of food stamps on birth outcomes. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*. 2011;93(2):387-403.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hoynes H, Schanzenbach DW, Almond D. Long-run impacts of childhood access to the safety net. *The American Economic Review*. 2016;106(4):903-934.

^{iv} Jeng K, Ettinger de Cuba S, March E, Meyers A, Cook J, Coleman S. Affordable Health Care Keeps Children Healthy. Children's HealthWatch. July 2009. Available at: http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/AffordableHealthCare_brief_July2009.pdf

^v Sheward R., Bovell, A., Ettinger de Cuba, S., Pasquariello, J., Sandel, M., Cook, J. (2016). The Earned Income Tax Credit in Massachusetts: Alleviating poverty today, increasing opportunity tomorrow. Children's HealthWatch. Available at: http://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-MA-EITC-brief-for-web_41216.pdf

^{vi} Hoynes, H. W., Miller, D. L., & Simon, D. (2012). Income, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and Infant Health. Working Paper 18206, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA.

^{vii} Muennig, P.A., Mohit, B., Wu, J., Haomiao, J., Rosen, Z. (2016). Cost Effectiveness of the Earned Income Tax Credit as a Health Policy Investment. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*. Vol. 51, Issue 6, Pages 874-881.