Washington Kids Win With Almost $7.5M Bonus for State's CHIP Program

Local News

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Today, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) celebrated Washington state’s $7,461,079 “performance bonus” awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a reward for enrolling more than 50,000 eligible uninsured children into Medicaid. Only nine states in the country qualified for the performance payments, which will increase the state’s federal Medicaid funding for eligible children.

“There are two wins here – first that Washington state enrolled 50.000 more eligible children in this program and second, that we’ve earned a huge bonus payment for our hard work,” said Cantwell. **“Our state has a long-standing record of leading the nation in innovative health care programs and I’m pleased to see the federal government rewarding our efforts to get more children access to quality health care.”**

The funding comes from a key provision in the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009, which Cantwell worked hard to pass earlier this year as a member of U.S. Senate Finance Committee. CHIPRA extends coverage to children in working families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to afford health care on their own. This performance bonus was included to recognize that successful efforts to enroll CHIP eligible kids can also succeed in bringing more children into Medicaid. Also included in this bill was Cantwell’s nearly $100 million fix for Washington state’s CHIP Program.

States qualified for the Medicaid bonuses by implementing at least five out of eight program features that promote enrollment and retention in children’s coverage for Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid. Some of the program features include providing 12 months of continuous enrollment, removing the requirement for an in-person interview in order to qualify for coverage, and streamlining the eligibility renewal process. States also needed to demonstrate that Medicaid enrollment among children increased above a target level. Nine states qualified for performance payments, with the total amount of federal payments totaling $72.6 million.