



Public policy in the best interest of children

June 1, 2018

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor, State of Michigan
PO Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: SB 897 – Medicaid Work Requirements and Children, Youth, and Families

As you enter your final months in office, Michigan's Children appreciates your work to ensure the viability of the Healthy Michigan Plan for future generations. As an independent voice for child and family policy issues, we recognize that health care coverage has many benefits: kids who receive consistent physical and mental care are healthier, attend school ready to learn, and are more likely to succeed as adults. We also know that when parents can go to the doctor, they're more likely to bring their kids. Families with coverage also borrow less money for medical costs, freeing up resources for other needs. Furthermore, the health and financial stability of young adults specifically, who often become parents early in adult life, helps determine the health and stability of their future families.

We are concerned that SB 897 would put these benefits for children, youth, and families at serious risk, even considering proposed changes like revising it to only apply to Healthy Michigan Plan enrollees. Parents of children up to age 6 are exempted in SB 897, but are on their own after that, even though they still face job market barriers and cannot find or afford child care: one-third of eligible children for child care subsidy in our system do not receive it. SB 897 exempts pregnant mothers, but we know that the preconception health of parents matters just as much to a baby's health. The average age of a Michigan mother at first birth is 26, and statewide unemployment for young adults aged 20-24 was 8.4% in 2016, one of Michigan's strongest-ever economic years. By exposing young adult health care coverage to market forces beyond their control, SB 897 could put young people and their future families at risk if they befall a single uncompensated medical emergency.

Encouraging citizens to contribute is a worthy goal, and we can nurture a more engaged society and workforce by raising healthy kids, and by protecting families from uncompensated crises that can quickly spiral out of control and threaten their security. We urge you to veto SB 897, and look forward to continuing to work to find solutions for strengthening Michigan's workforce without putting families at risk.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gillard
President & CEO
Michigan's Children

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