

Partnerships in Philanthropy  
National Chamber of Commerce  
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Remarks by Sarah Shuptrine  
President/CEO, Southern Institute on Children and Families

Thank you, Secretary Shalala.

The Southern Institute on Children and Families is a non-profit public policy organization. We place a high value on public/private collaboration. Our focus is on removing barriers faced by families seeking health coverage, child care and other benefits. We are committed to hanging in there until the job gets done.

We are pleased to serve as the National Program Office for the Covering Kids initiative sponsored by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The public/private partnerships that are the hallmark of Covering Kids have significantly strengthened efforts to identify and enroll uninsured children who are eligible for Medicaid or the State Child Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP.

The three goals of Covering Kids are: 1) to conduct effective outreach; 2) to achieve simplification in the initial application and coverage renewal processes; and 3) to achieve effective coordination across child health coverage programs.

There are Covering Kids statewide projects in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and 172 Covering Kids local pilot projects. Both the state and local Covering Kids projects are led by broad-based, public/private coalitions.

More than 4,200 public and private organizations are working as partners with Covering Kids initiatives, and that number continues to grow. Dozens of local foundations provide additional support for Covering Kids projects.

The Southern Institute has worked effectively with federal and state agencies, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and we also have assisted the U.S. Department of Labor in developing outreach materials.

We have worked in partnership with three HHS agencies - the Health Care Financing Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Administration for Children and Families.

1. The Southern Institute established effective communication to promote dialogue on issues and opportunities identified by Covering Kids initiatives in order to achieve needed clarification of federal Medicaid and SCHIP policies and to disseminate the information once clarified;

2. We have linked federal agencies to Covering Kids projects that needed technical assistance;
3. We have enlisted the participation of HCFA, HRSA, DOE and the Department of Agriculture in regional and national Covering Kids meetings and have likewise participated in meetings sponsored by federal agencies;
4. We post federal agency information on the Covering Kids website and provide links to federal agency websites; and
5. We assisted in the development, promotion and implementation of the [Insure Kids Now](#) toll-free number and the 1999 Back-to-School DOE campaign, as well as the follow-up conference coordinated by HRSA.

There is no doubt that these collective efforts significantly enhanced the effectiveness of our joint goal of reaching out to families with eligible children.

The Southern Institute also works with HHS and USDA in connection with the Supporting Families After Welfare Reform National Program, also sponsored by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

And finally, in order to help develop and implement more progressive child care assistance programs, the Southern Institute established the Southern Regional Initiative on Child Care, which is a public-private partnership headed by a regional Task Force. At the invitation of the Southern Institute, governors in 16 southern states appointed representatives to the Task Force. The Task Force recently released its report setting forth 10 goals and 52 action steps that need to be taken by federal and state governments and the private sector, especially businesses, to improve access to child care financial assistance. The Administration for Children and Families provided information and data during Task Force deliberations and assigned a member to the project's Staff Work Group. This initiative is supported by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these initiatives with you.