

MEMORANDUM

To State Partners
From Ed Walz, VP Communications
Date January 9, 2012
Re ACA messaging recommendations



State partners have asked about our recommended messages on covering children through the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Though the political dynamic surrounding the ACA varies from state to state and over time, our experience working with policymakers and state advocates suggests a few key messaging themes, which are **highlighted** here as part of a set of recommended talking points.

- *STATE* has made **real progress covering our uninsured kids through CHIP PROGRAM NAME and Medicaid**
- The **Affordable Care Act (ACA) builds on that success**, strengthening Medicaid to reach more uninsured or underinsured kids
- In fact, the **ACA's already delivered wins for our kids:**
 - Blocking insurance companies from denying kids coverage when they need it most—even if they have a pre-existing condition;
 - Helping more than 1 million young adults get the care they need through their parent's health plan; and
 - Providing tax credits that are already making it easier for small businesses to cover families
- The ACA's new competitive health insurance **exchange will allow parents to cover even more of our kids** through a **private marketplace** that's easier to use, offers coverage for the care kids actually need, and options parents and small businesses can afford
- But that promise of better, more affordable care through a system that actually works – **only happens if STATE makes the right choices in implementing the ACA**
- Our success covering kids shows that, if politicians **stop pointing fingers and start solving problems**, we can actually make progress that matters to real people

As you can see, the key messaging themes are short and flexible. This will allow you to adjust them for a wide range of communications opportunities – from a Twitter tweet to a stump speech – and adapt them for your organization's advocacy style and your state's political climate.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you. The more consistently we can all deliver these messages to policymakers and influential audiences in key states, the better we will all be able to shape the debate.

At the same time, we recognize that messaging needs to adjust to varying political realities and changing policy dynamics. We would appreciate your feedback on the recommended messaging themes, now and as you integrate them into your children's health communications over the coming months.

Please feel free to contact me or my First Focus colleagues to provide feedback on the recommended messages or if you have questions. Thanks again for your interest in partnering with us on this important communications opportunity.