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OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY

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MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WEST VIRGINIA CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM EXPANDS ELIGIBILITY TO 300% FPL, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2011

More Uninsured Children will Receive Health Care Coverage

Charleston, W.Va. – West Virginia Children's Health Insurance Program (WVCHIP) officials announced today that health care coverage is now available to children of families with a gross income up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), effective July 1, 2011. The eligibility limit was previously set at 250 percent of the FPL. With this increase, the WVCHIP program is now accepting applications for the new eligibility levels.

The WVCHIP Board approved this proposed expansion at its February 2011 meeting. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services recently approved the plan as requested by the WVCHIP Board.

"Earlier this year, I asked the West Virginia Children's Health Insurance Program Board to consider expanding health care coverage of uninsured children and they did so," Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said. "The sooner qualified families file an application for coverage, the sooner benefits will be available and our youngest citizens can begin receiving affordable health care."

The new guidelines allow eligible families to have health care coverage for their children through monthly premium payments. Families qualifying for the WVCHIP Premium Plan (201 – 300 percent of the FPL) will be charged a monthly premium of \$35 per month for one child and \$71 per month for two or more children. Total cost of premiums and co-payments will not exceed more than 5 percent of the family's total annual gross income.

For more information on co-payments and benefits, please visit www.chip.wv.gov. The new guidelines expand eligibility for a family of four with a household income of approximately \$55,000 to approximately \$67,000. It is anticipated that more than 330 children will be eligible for health insurance in the first year.

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The application process for the premium plan is the same for all plans. Families can apply to enroll on July 1, 2011, but may need to allow an additional month for enrollment and premium payment processing before accessing services.

Eligibility requirements for the WVCHIP include:

- Reside in West Virginia
- Under age 19
- Lost family coverage in the last three months (some exceptions apply)
- Not eligible for the West Virginia State Employee Health Insurance – PEIA
- Not eligible for West Virginia Medicaid
- Income and family size fall within qualifying Income Guidelines
- A United States citizen or qualified alien (Children who are not U.S. citizens must provide verification of their alien status.)

To learn more about eligibility standards and to apply, call the WVCHIP toll-free helpline at 1-877-982-2447; visit the WVCHIP website; or visit the local Department of Health and Human Resources.