



New Survey Shows that New Englanders Strongly Support Expanding SCHIP to Cover More Uninsured Children

March 5, 2007 – A new poll, sponsored by the New England Alliance for Children’s Health¹ and supported by a broad partnership of funders,² was conducted by Lake Research Partners January 26 - February 8, 2007 among 2,401 registered voters from all six New England states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The survey examined voters’ opinions about the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). SCHIP is a focus for the 110th U.S. Congress and state legislatures this year. The original ten-year authorization for SCHIP expires in 2007, and a key issue will be how much funding is allocated for the program. While elected officials in Washington, DC debate about funding for SCHIP, New Englanders are clear: *they want SCHIP expanded to cover more uninsured children*. Indeed, they support efforts to cover *all* uninsured children in their states.

These survey results reinforce research findings from other states across the country – that health care and affordable coverage is a top priority and concern among voters. During these times, it is not surprising that voters are unwilling to cut funding for a program that provides affordable coverage – especially for children – and instead want to *expand* health care coverage.

Key findings, a chart pack, and survey methodology can be found on the following pages.

¹ The New England Alliance for Children’s Health is a regional coalition of consumers, health care providers, business leaders, educators, interfaith organizations and advocacy groups working to ensure that all children have access to high quality health care. The Alliance has been made possible with support from Children’s Hospital Boston.

² Many organizations contributed to this project, including the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, Connecticut Health Foundation, Endowment for Health, HNHfoundation, Maine Health Access Foundation, National Association of Children’s Hospitals, Rhode Island Foundation, and Vermont Community Foundation.



Key Findings

- **New England voters not only support their SCHIP programs, the vast majority favors expanding SCHIP to cover all children in their state.** Nearly all voters (95%) say SCHIP is an important program, and a vast majority (79%) considers it a very important program. (See Figure 1) Nearly nine in ten (89%) favor expanding SCHIP to cover all uninsured children in their state, and seven in ten (70%) feel this way strongly. This support crosses political parties, and is equal among parents with young children and those without, as well as the insured and uninsured. (See Figure 2)
- **New England voters want to increase funding for SCHIP – at both federal and state levels.** Seven in ten (69%) voters want Congress to provide enough funding to expand SCHIP. (See Figure 3) Only seven percent of voters favor keeping funding at current levels, which would result in dropping children from the program. Voters feel similarly about state funding; 84% favor increasing state funds for their SCHIP program. (See Figure 4)
- **Support for increasing funding stays strong even when the price tag is attached.** Seventy-eight percent of voters favor Congress increasing funding by \$8 billion, even when they hear this would cost about \$28 per American. (See Figure 5) Majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats favor increasing funding, as well as voters of all income levels.
- **Voters reject the argument that there are other more important funding priorities, and they disagree that cutting taxes should take precedence over children's health coverage.** About three quarters of voters reject both of these arguments, including majorities of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats, as well as voters of all income levels. (See Figure 6)
- **Voters across New England support SCHIP programs because they believe strongly that all children should have the health care they need to grow and learn.** Nearly all voters (97%) believe this – 84% strongly. (See Figure 7)
- **Economic factors, such as fewer employers providing health care coverage and expensive emergency room visits, are also seen as reasons to invest more in SCHIP.** Nine in ten (91%) voters agree that investing more in SCHIP is important with the trend of fewer employers providing coverage for workers and families. Additionally, 92% agree that SCHIP is a smart investment because preventative care can avoid costly emergency room visits in the future. (See Figure 7)
- **New England voters also support offering affordable coverage to the low-income parents of children enrolled in SCHIP, if the parent's job does not offer health insurance.** Nearly nine in ten (89%) favor this policy idea, with two-thirds (65%) expressing strong support. (See Figure 8)

Figure 1: Importance of SCHIP Program

Q. In your opinion, do you think (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) is a very important program, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all an important program?

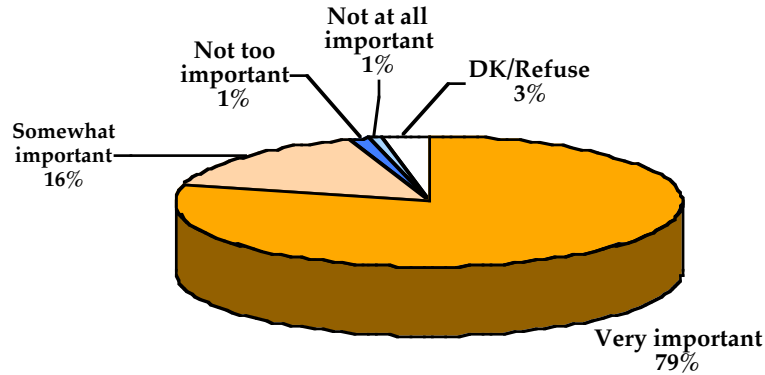


Figure 2: Expand SCHIP to Cover All Uninsured Children in State

Q. State elected officials will be discussing different ideas about (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) this year. Please tell me whether you favor or oppose each of the following ideas: Expand the program so that every uninsured child in (STATE) can get health care coverage.

	Favor (Total)	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor
<i>Total: All New England Voters</i>	89%	70%	19%
Party ID			
Democrats	96%	81%	15%
Independents	86%	66%	20%
Republicans	79%	53%	26%
Parents of Children <18			
Children <18	89%	71%	18%
No Children <18	89%	70%	19%
Health Insurance Status			
Insured	89%	70%	19%
Uninsured	93%	71%	22%

Figure 3: Invest More Federal Funds in SCHIP

Q. (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) gets much of its funding at the federal level. This year, the U.S. Congress must make decisions about the federal funding for this program. Which statement best describes your thoughts on what Congress should do:

A) Keep funding the program at the same level even though that will mean dropping children from the program because of the rising cost of health care.	7%
B) Put enough money into the program so it can continue to cover the same number of children as it does now.	17%
C) Put even more money into the program so that more of the nearly nine million uninsured children nationwide can get health coverage.	69%

Figure 4: Invest More State Funds in SCHIP

Q. Now thinking about your state government, do you favor or oppose (STATE) investing more in the (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) program so that it can cover more of (STATE'S) uninsured children? (Is that strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?)

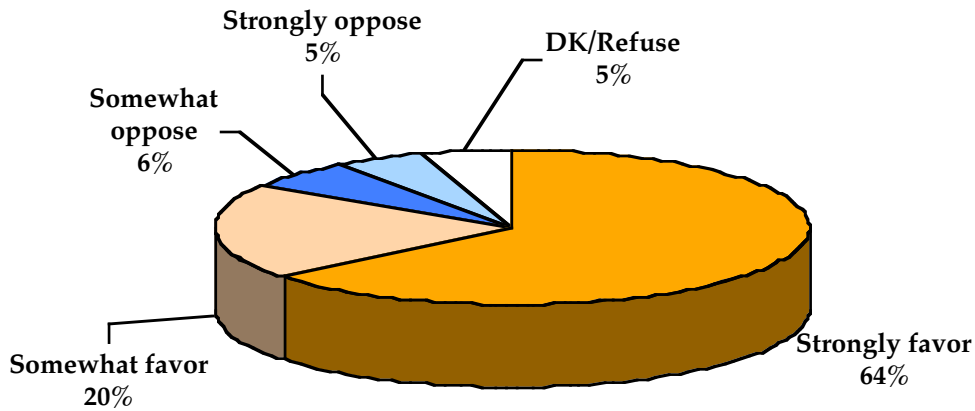


Figure 5: Increase SCHIP Funding By \$8 Billion -- \$28 Per American

Q. Leading child health experts estimate that we could cut the number of low-income uninsured children in America in half if the US Congress invests 8 billion dollars more per year over the next five years. This would be about \$28 a year per American. Would you favor or oppose Congress increasing funding for Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program by 8 billion dollars a year for the next 5 years? *Base N=1203, split sample*

	Favor (Total)	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Total: All New England Voters	78%	58%	20%	6%	8%
Party ID					
Democrats	89%	72%	17%	2%	2%
Independents	77%	51%	26%	8%	8%
Republicans	63%	39%	23%	10%	17%
Household Income					
Less than \$20K	86%	75%	11%	2%	7%
\$20K to \$40K	86%	68%	18%	4%	3%
\$40K to \$60K	75%	52%	22%	7%	8%
\$60K to \$80K	78%	55%	23%	6%	10%
\$80K to \$100K	80%	52%	27%	6%	8%
\$100K+	86%	60%	26%	1%	9%

Voters' Attitudes Toward SCHIP

Figure 6: Voters Reject Arguments About Other Priorities and Cutting Taxes

Q. State elected officials will be discussing different ideas about (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) this year. Please tell me whether you favor or oppose each of the following ideas: Cut back on the program so that funding can go toward other priorities. Q. I'd like to read reasons some people say we should not expand the program. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each reason for not expanding: Right now we need to focus on cutting taxes, not spending more on children's health coverage.

	Cut Back on SCHIP for Other Priorities (% Total <u>Oppose</u>)	Focus Should Be On Cutting Taxes, Not Spending More on Children's Health Coverage (% Total <u>Disagree</u>)
<i>All New England Voters</i>	78%	76%
Party ID		
Democrats	82%	84%
Independents	79%	72%
Republicans	72%	65%
Household Income		
Less than \$20K	73%	72%
\$20K to \$40K	78%	78%
\$40K to \$60K	81%	73%
\$60K to \$80K	82%	74%
\$80K to \$100K	79%	80%
\$100K+	86%	85%

Voters' Attitudes Toward SCHIP

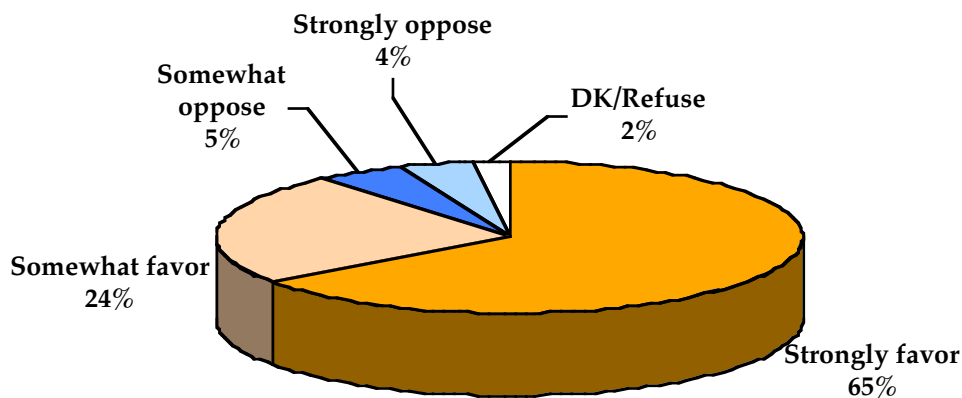
Figure 7: Why Voters Want to Invest More in SCHIP

Q. Here are some reasons people say we should invest more into the program. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following reasons to invest more in (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP).

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree
All children should have the health care they need to grow and learn.	84%	13%
With fewer companies these days providing health coverage for their workers and their families, (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) is especially important for making sure that children in working families can keep getting the health services they need.	70%	21%
The state budget needs to be spent wisely, and investing in children’s preventive health care now, to avoid costly emergency care later, is a smart way to invest in our state’s future economy.	73%	19%

Figure 8: Offering Affordable Coverage to SCHIP Parents

Q. State elected officials will be discussing different ideas about (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) this year. Please tell me whether you favor or oppose each of the following ideas: Allow low-income, working parents of the children enrolled in (STATE NAME FOR SCHIP) to get affordable health coverage for themselves through the program, if their job does not offer health insurance.



Voters' Attitudes Toward SCHIP

Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey, which was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers from January 26 through February 8, 2007. The survey was conducted among 2,401 registered voters age 18 and older in New England. A total of 400 interviews were conducted in each New England state: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn from a random-digit-dial (RDD) sample in each state. The sample was executed in replicates, using a seven callback design. A screening question asked respondents if they were registered to vote at their current address. Only those who said “yes” were included in the survey.

The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, and race to reflect their proper proportions according to the US Census. The “total data” from all New England states have been weighted so that each state reflects its proper proportion of New England.

In interpreting survey results, all probability sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those which would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question. The margin of sampling error for the total survey results is ± 3.2 percentage points. When looking at smaller subgroups within the sample, such as the state oversamples and cross-tabulations, the margin of error will be greater. For each state, the margin of sampling error is ± 4.9 percentage points. The table below represents the estimated sampling error for different percentage distributions of responses based on sample size.

**Margin of Sampling Error
for Different Percentage Distributions and Different Sample Sizes
(95% confidence)**

SAMPLE SIZE NEAR	PERCENTAGES NEAR								
	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
1,000	1.9	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.5	1.9
800	2.1	2.8	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.1
600	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
400	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
200	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
100	5.9	7.8	9.0	9.6	9.7	9.6	9.0	7.8	5.9