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Starr and Winters Work to Reduce Number of Uninsured Children

“Children across Oregon are going without health insurance when they don’t have to”

SALEM – Senators hope to cut the number of uninsured Oregon children in half with a bill passed Thursday. Senate Bill 446 seeks to get the word out about state sponsored health insurance programs they may already be eligible to receive.

“This is a simple fix that will help us reduce the number of uninsured children,” stated Senator Jackie Winters (R-Salem). “If families do not know the program exists they cannot access the healthcare services their children need.”

Current estimates place the number of uninsured children at 105,000 statewide. Of those 67,000 may qualify for the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. The program uses both state and federal funds to give children whose families meet eligibility requirements medical, dental, and vision care at no cost to the family. Senate Bill 446 would help inform families of the program.

“Children across Oregon are going without health insurance when they don’t have to,” stated Senator Bruce Starr (R-Hillsboro). “Let’s make sure Oregon children are getting the healthcare they need so they can be in their classrooms healthy and ready to learn.”

Winters says there is a link between the high number of uninsured and skyrocketing hospital costs. “The costs associated with uninsured children ending up in emergency rooms are passed on to all Oregonians through increased hospital rates,” stated Winters. “It makes sense both morally and financially to cover as many children as possible.”

Senate Bill 449 passed the Senate Thursday and now heads to the House where Winters and Starr hope it will be approved.