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Georgia General Assembly Clears the Way for Streamlined Medicaid Enrollment

Atlanta – This morning the Georgia Senate unanimously approved legislation that will streamline the enrollment of uninsured children in our state. House Bill 163 will allow the state to use data from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to enroll up to 70,000 children in Medicaid.

“We applaud these efforts to address this urgent issue,” said Dr. Erica Fener Sitkoff, Executive Director of Voices for Georgia’s Children. “Approximately 197,000 children under the age of 19 in Georgia lacked health insurance coverage in 2019 – the fourth-highest uninsured child population in the country. The majority of these children are eligible for, but not enrolled in, Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids.”

The absence of health insurance results in inconsistent care and can lead to poor lifelong health outcomes. Latino children in Georgia are three times as likely to lack health insurance as White children, and more than twice as likely to lack health insurance as Black children, in large part due to language barriers, cultural differences, and concerns about immigration status. Lack of health insurance for adults who care for children, whether parents or otherwise, also hinder health and financial stability of children and families.

“The passage of HB 163 fulfills a key recommendation in the [2021 Whole Child Primer](#),” said Sitkoff. “Using SNAP data will improve efficiency in the system because the income level qualifying a family for food assistance, also qualifies children for Medicaid based on Medicaid income guidelines.”

House Bill 163 now heads to the Governor’s desk.

For more recommendations to improve child well-being for Georgia’s 2.5 million children, check out the [2021 Whole Child Primer](#).

EXPRESS LANE ELIGIBILITY IMPLEMENTATION WOULD:

- Facilitate insuring an estimated 60,000-70,000 currently uninsured children
- Prevent gaps in children’s Medicaid coverage by facilitating automatic renewals
- Enable administrative efficiencies for the state

Voices for Georgia’s Children is the state’s only comprehensive policy and advocacy organization committed to improving the lives of Georgia’s children. Through research and analysis, public education, convening and engagement with state decision-makers, Voices is striving to ensure ALL children thrive. Our work is framed in a holistic “whole child” perspective that allows us to identify how different policies impact children and to propose solutions that benefit children on multiple levels.