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Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Appeals the Importance of the Governor's Initiatives in Health and Income

Madison - Wisconsin's status as the state that had the most rapid growth in the poverty rate underscores the importance of Governor Doyle's announcements in last night's State of the State address of new initiatives that would mitigate the effects of poverty on children, according to the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF).

"Children don't choose to live in poverty, yet the effects of poverty can remain with them throughout their lives," said Charity Eleson, executive director for the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. "With the creation of these new initiatives, the Governor has clearly recognized how devastating poverty is for children and how important real solutions are."

Governor Doyle's plan would insure all children, regardless of their income and make it easier for families to gain access to health care benefits for which they are currently eligible. In its recently published WisKids Count Data Book 2005, WCCF supported a move to ensure that 100 percent of Wisconsin's children have health insurance coverage.

WCCF also supports the Governor's plan to create a new refundable tax credit for working families that would ensure that families working at least 35 hours a week are not forced to live below the poverty line.

"Families who are doing everything they can do to get employed and stay employed, but who still don't earn enough to put them beyond the grasp of poverty need our help," said Eleson. "The Governor's refundable working families tax credit policy is a compassionate policy that will also improve the very precarious financial position of low-income working families who have felt the bite of increased costs for heating fuel, housing and gas."

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