

Nov. 2, 2009

**Media contacts:** Cathy Kaufmann, Healthy Kids, 503-569-4514, [cathy.kaufmann@state.or.us](mailto:cathy.kaufmann@state.or.us)  
Eve Ford, Healthy KidsConnect, 503-378-5613, [eve.ford@state.or.us](mailto:eve.ford@state.or.us)

## *OHA takes step toward affordable health insurance for kids*

(Salem, Ore.) — The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) today announced its intent to award contracts to five health insurance providers to offer affordable private market coverage to Oregon's uninsured children.

The contracts, which are subject to negotiations, mark a milestone in the development of Healthy Kids, the state's plan to provide health coverage to uninsured children. The plan was championed by Governor Kulongoski and passed by the Legislature earlier this year.

“Even the healthiest children need health coverage, but too many Oregon families struggle to afford it,” said Healthy Kids Manager Cathy Kaufmann. “Thanks to Healthy Kids, thousands more children in both low- and middle-income families will finally be able to get the coverage they need.”

Once finalized, the contracts will help qualifying Oregon families afford insurance through a private market plan. The Oregon Health Authority is reviewing a bid from PacificSource Health Plans to provide coverage on a statewide level as well as bids to provide coverage on a regional level from Clear One Health Plans, Inc., Samaritan Health Plans, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest, and a partnership of Trillium Community Health Plan and Lane Individual Practice Association. All are Oregon-based providers.

The private market component of Healthy Kids, known as Healthy KidsConnect, is designed for families who earn too much income to qualify for health benefits under the Oregon Health Plan but still struggle to afford coverage. As many as 35,000 uninsured Oregon children could be covered under the private market option, according to projections from the Department of Human Services.

Healthy KidsConnect, which is expected to be available in January 2010, will provide families with comprehensive medical, dental, vision and mental health coverage for their children at affordable rates. The private market option will be available for all Oregon families with incomes at or above 200 percent of the federal poverty level — currently \$44,100 for a family of four — and who meet specific eligibility criteria. Subsidies will be available to help pay premiums for qualifying families between 200 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Families below 200 percent FPL are able to receive free health insurance for their children through Healthy Kids right now.

For more information about the health coverage options under Healthy Kids, please visit [www.oregonhealthykids.gov](http://www.oregonhealthykids.gov).

