



**For Immediate Release:  
June 28, 2012**

**Contact: John Morgan, Exec. Dir.  
John@vakids.org**

## **Voices for Virginia's Children Celebrates Health Reform Victory for the Commonwealth's Children and Families**

701 East Franklin Street  
Suite 807  
Richmond, Virginia 22030  
804-649-0184

Northern Virginia Office  
4031 University drive  
Suite 200  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
703-277-7748

[www.vakids.org](http://www.vakids.org)

**Voices for Virginia's Children** is a statewide, non-profit policy research and advocacy organization that champions public policies and practices that improve the lives of children. A recognized leader in child advocacy, Voices advances our initiatives by conducting research, developing policies and supporting materials, leading campaigns and coalitions and generating a groundswell of support statewide for positive children's policy in Virginia. Voices also serves as the KIDSCOUNT data center for the Commonwealth.

Voices for Virginia's Children today celebrates the Supreme Court decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act (ACA) health reform law, as the ACA offers critical protections and benefits for the Commonwealth's families and children, and will bring us much closer to the reachable goal of ensuring access to quality health care for all children. Currently, there are nearly 160,000 uninsured children in Virginia, many of whom are now eligible for new or additional services and protections under the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act also takes the long view of a healthy nation, providing for preventive care, continuity of service and expanded access to health care like never before:

- ✓ The Act **requires insurers to cover preventive screenings and well-child care at no cost to parents** – a significant step towards making sure children start out on a healthy path and perhaps avoid significant, costly care down the road. And if children do need extensive care, the Affordable Care Act lifts lifetime coverage limits (and starting in 2014, annual limits) on the dollar value of services – great news for families of kids with chronic and serious medical conditions.
- ✓ The Act already **prevents denial of coverage for kids based on health conditions they developed prior to their parents seeking enrollment**. And once the law is fully in effect in a couple of years, this “no denial for pre-existing conditions” provision will apply to adults as well – meaning that families will be better able to maintain consistent coverage, even if they have to move from place to place or in and out of employment. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that as many as 17 million children nationwide have such pre-existing conditions.
- ✓ The Affordable Care Act also **extends Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding**, which provides coverage for approximately seven million low-income children whose parents earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to purchase health insurance on their own. Covering these children means that they will be more likely to receive preventive well-child check-ups, which foster healthy development and well-being.

Of special significance to Voices' mission, as well, is the inclusion in the ACA of \$1.5 billion in mandatory funds for a new Home Visitation Grant Program, and the extension of Medicaid coverage (in 2014) to all foster youth below the age of 25 who were formerly in care for six months or more. The Home Visitation program will support Virginia's efforts to develop and implement evidence-based maternal, infant and early childhood visitation models.

**Voices Executive Director John Morgan** said, “The Affordable Care Act brings Virginia closer than ever before to becoming a state that keeps our children healthy and on the path to meeting their full potential, and that is a victory for everyone.”