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1. SCHIP Extended; Negotiations Break Down

Late Thursday night, a bipartisan group of legislators seeking Republican votes on the contentious State Children's Health Bill (SCHIP) disbanded until after the Thanksgiving holiday when they were unable to reach an agreement. Nevertheless, the program is continuing under a continuing resolution through December 14. Flashpoints continue to be limiting coverage of adults under the program and restrictions on illegal immigrants.

2. HOUSE FAILS TO OVERRIDE VETO OF HHS SPENDING BILL

Also late Thursday night, the House of Representatives failed to override the president's veto of the Labor-HHS-Education bill on a 277-141 vote, a scant two votes short of the two-thirds needed. President Bush vetoed the domestic spending bill on Tuesday stating that it contained \$9.6 billion more than he requested. Senate Majority Harry Reid (D-NV) proposed an omnibus appropriations bill that would split the difference between what Congress and the White House have proposed as discretionary spending totals for the Labor-HHS bill.

3. HELP COMMITTEE PASSES NEWBORN SCREENING, DISCUSSES WORKFORCE

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee approved a bill supported by AAFP to establish grant programs for education and outreach on newborn screening and to allow professional schools to continue medical education programs on evaluating the risks of congenital conditions.

The committee also approved legislation sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT) that would reauthorize the Community Health Center Program to provide health care to low-income and uninsured people in medically underserved areas. The bill also would add \$60 million over five years in additional funds for the National Health Service Corps, a program that provides scholarships and loan repayments.

Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) offered an amendment, later withdrawn, to offer grants to medical students who do their residency training in community health centers. Her amendment prompted Chairman Edward Kennedy (D-MA) to promise to hold a hearing on the reauthorization of Title VII healthcare workforce programs early next year due to his recognition of the workforce crisis in medically underserved communities. Senators Jack Reed (D-RI), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) all concurred on the importance of reauthorizing Title VII and tackling health care workforce issues.