**Our Position**

We believe that every child in America deserves a healthy first 1,000 days. For this reason, 1,000 Days supports guaranteed access to high-quality, affordable health insurance that offers comprehensive benefits for pre-conception and pre-natal care, maternity services, breastfeeding and post-partum supports, pediatric care and other critical maternal, infant and young child health services.

**What’s At Stake**

For young children and their families, high-quality health care coverage is a foundational investment in healthier and more prosperous futures. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), which is sometimes referred to as “Obamacare”, resulted in a significant increase in the number of American families who have health insurance through an employer, the Health Insurance Marketplace or Medicaid. It also improved insurance coverage for essential health services—including many that support women and young children. Specifically, the ACA requires that all health insurance plans, including employer sponsored plans, (a) cover a comprehensive package of critical services for women and children during pregnancy, childbirth, infancy, breastfeeding and beyond and (b) offer preventive services free of charge (i.e. without co-pays or other charges). Moreover, the ACA ensures that women are no longer denied insurance coverage or charged more as a result of pre-existing conditions such as breast cancer, pregnancy, C-sections and diabetes.

This is currently all at risk. Efforts to repeal and replace the ACA will roll back the dramatic improvements in health care coverage and quality. What is more, all women’s coverage, including those with insurance through their jobs, could get weakened and result in inferior maternity care.

Research shows that access to health care saves lives and is key to reducing America’s exceedingly high rates of deaths of women during childbirth and babies in their first year of life. What’s more, access to high-quality preconception and prenatal care for women leads to healthier pregnancies which in turn means safer births, healthier babies and lower costs for all of us. Finally, insurance coverage of breastfeeding counselling, breast-pumps and other supplies as well as provisions under the health law that require employers to provide break time for nursing mothers to pump during the work day are essential to supporting women to breastfeed longer. Countless studies show that longer durations of breastfeeding mean lower risk of illness and disease for both mom and baby and saves the U.S. billions of dollars in unnecessary medical costs.
Repealing the ACA or unraveling health insurance protections will have detrimental, long-lasting impacts on the health and wellbeing of young children and their families throughout the U.S. Repeal efforts will likely result in skyrocketing rates of uninsured women, putting the lives of many of America’s mothers and babies at risk, and mean higher health care costs and weaker benefit packages for all Americans.

**Solutions We Support**

**Coverage for All**
Health insurance must be available to everyone regardless of their employment or income. This can best be accomplished by maintaining existing coverage options in the Health Insurance Marketplace and supporting and fully funding Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

**Affordable**
Coverage should be affordable to everyone, with financial assistance available on a sliding scale. Medicaid and CHIP play a critical role in providing coverage to low-income families and children.

**Comprehensive**
Plans must be required to offer coverage for all the essential services needed by young children and their families during the first 1,000 days and beyond, including critical preventive services which must be offered free of charge. These include:

- Comprehensive maternity benefit (i.e. prenatal care and childbirth services) as well as pre-conception care
- Comprehensive pediatric benefit and well-child care;
- Breastfeeding services such as counseling and lactation management and supplies and equipment such as breast pumps.
- Nutrition counseling, folic acid supplements and weight management during pregnancy;
- Well-woman visits and health screenings for conditions such as anemia, gestational diabetes, and post-partum depression—all of which have detrimental effects on the health of mom and baby.

**Access to Services**
All plans must include meaningful access to in-network providers to support the delivery of all the services needed in the first 1,000 days and beyond. A range of provider types must be covered, including lactation specialists, community-based providers and home visitors. Health providers should be trained to understand the unique needs of families during the first 1,000 days.

**Support for Nursing Mothers at Work**
The health care law must ensure that nursing mothers have access to reasonable break time and a private, non-bathroom place for to express breast milk during their work day.

**Call to Action**
We call on Congress and the Administration to maintain or improve existing health care access, quality and coverage. Comprehensive, affordable and high-quality health coverage for families is essential to ensure that every child has the strongest start to life.