

RSA e-News

**UP TO THE MINUTE NEWS
FROM
THE RESEARCH SOCIETY ON ALCOHOLISM**

SCHIP REAUTHORIZATION SIGNED INTO LAW

**HOUSE PASSES ECONOMIC STIMULUS, SENATE POISED TO ACT THIS WEEK
February 5, 2009**

SCHIP

On Wednesday February 4th, President Obama signed into law the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (H.R. 2). The \$32.8 billion legislation reauthorizes and expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). It is entirely funded by an increase in the cigarette tax of 62 cents per pack as well as higher taxes on other tobacco products. The legislation increases the number of children covered by SCHIP from 7 million to 11 million. The measure would remove a five-year waiting period for the SCHIP program for new, legal immigrants, including pregnant women, and loosen citizenship and eligibility documentation requirements. The bill would limit program eligibility to families earning three times the federal poverty level or less and would require states to phase out coverage of childless adults. The Senate approved the bill by a 66 to 32 vote last week. Following the Senate's actions, the House agreed to the Senate amended version of H.R. 2 by a 290 to 135 vote on February 4th. The President signed the bill into law within hours after the House action.

STIMULUS

The House last week passed H.R. 1, the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," its \$819 billion version of the economic stimulus bill by a 244 to 188 vote. No Republican voted for the bill. The Senate began consideration of S.1, an \$888 billion stimulus package on Monday, and has spent the week debating amendments to the economic package that have changed the final funding cost of the overall bill—the current tally is over \$900 billion. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) said he aims to pass the stimulus bill by the end of the week, so the House and Senate could conference the package in time to send it to President Obama before the Presidents Day recess. Given the sheer magnitude of this legislation and its importance to the country, working out the differences between the House and Senate bills will be no easy task.

Of special note is an amendment to the stimulus bill offered by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), and supported by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) to provide an additional \$6.5 billion to the National Institutes of Health for biomedical research that would be made available through the Office of the Director. The amendment was adopted by a voice vote on Tuesday evening.

The chart below is a comparison of the research provisions in the House and Senate stimulus packages.

Issue	House Stimulus Bill (H.R.1)	Senate Stimulus Bill (S.1)
Comparative Effectiveness Research	\$1.1B for Healthcare Research and Quality programs to compare the effectiveness of different medical treatments funded by Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP. Establishes the Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research to coordinate comparative effectiveness and related health services research and to advise the Congress on strategies with respect to the infrastructure needs of comparative effectiveness research within the government.	\$1.1B to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, NIH and HHS to evaluate the relative effectiveness of different health care services and treatment options. This proposal would invest \$700M to fund immediate studies on the comparative effectiveness of various medical tests and treatments through the AHRQ and the NIH. The proposal would also provide \$400 million to HHS for new studies.
Scientific Research	<p>National Science Foundation: \$3B, including \$2B for expanding employment opportunities in science and engineering, \$400M to build major research facilities, \$300M for major research equipment, \$200M to repair and modernize science and engineering research facilities, and \$100M improve instruction in science, math & engineering.</p> <p>National Institutes of Health Biomedical Research: \$2B, including \$1.5B for expanding jobs in biomedical research to study diseases and \$500M to implement the repair and improvement strategic plan developed by the NIH.</p> <p>University Research Facilities: \$1.5B for NIH to renovate university research facilities and help them compete for biomedical research grants.</p> <p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: \$462M to enable CDC to complete its Buildings and Facilities Master Plan, as well as renovations and construction needs of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.</p> <p>Biomedical Advanced Research and Development, Pandemic Flu, and Cyber Security: \$900M to prepare for a pandemic influenza, support advanced development of countermeasures for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats, and for cyber security protections at HHS.</p>	<p>National Science Foundation: \$1.4 billion in funding for scientific research, infrastructure and competitive grants.</p> <p>National Institutes of Health Biomedical Research: \$3.5 billion to conduct biomedical research in areas such as cancer, Alzheimer’s, heart disease and stem cells, and to improve NIH facilities.</p>
Prevention and Wellness	\$3B to fight preventable chronic diseases, including hospital infection prevention, Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grants for state and local public health departments, immunization programs and disease prevention.	\$5.8B to fight preventable diseases and conditions. \$870 million to complete funding for the President’s initiative on pandemic flu preparedness.