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THE STATE BUDGET:
GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL
HEALTH

- [Tom Chorneau](#)

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PROPOSAL: After raising expectations in recent weeks that he would allocate big dollars for children's health insurance, the governor proposed spending only a fraction of what is needed.

Administration officials said \$32 million would be added to the health budget to streamline application paperwork, which they believe will result in about 74,000 more kids joining the Healthy Families program. Still, there would be nearly 700,000 uninsured children statewide.

Kim Belshé, the governor's secretary over health and human services, said that full coverage of children is part of the governor's plan for bringing universal health care to California. The plan, announced Monday, is a vast overhaul of the state's system that includes mandates for employers to provide insurance and for residents to have coverage.

WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU: Health care is one of the biggest sources of spending in the budget -- and one of the fastest growing. One cause, experts say, are the billions of dollars spent to subsidize care of the uninsured.

The governor's overhaul, which many believe could help cut costs, could also take years to become law.

REACTION: "We're pleased that the governor has stepped forward with such an ambitious health care plan, but we're hopeful that children's health can be covered this year. We look forward to the debate, but if we are in the same place six months from now, we'll be disappointed," Jim Keddy, spokesman for PICO National Network, a coalition of faith-based organizations that support health care expansion.

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