

***Insurance Times:*** NY kids guaranteed health coverage in child support

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ALBANY — New York Gov. George Pataki has signed a bill into law that ensures children receive health care benefits as part of court child-support proceedings.

The measure sets clear guidelines for judges to follow when determining which parent's health care plan should cover the children. In cases where neither parent has health insurance, judges must order one of the parents to seek coverage either through the state's Child Health Plus program or Medicaid.

Existing law requires judges to consider health care coverage during child-support proceedings, but provides no guidelines.

"This tells the court to look at the plans and determine which coverage works best for the child," said Brooklyn Democrat Helene Weinstein, the bill's state Assembly sponsor. "Lots of health insurance plans have strange requirements, so a child could've been covered in name, but it realistically didn't work."