

March 1, 2011

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

Since their inception, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) have been key sources of health coverage stability for millions of the nation's low-income children and families, seniors, and people with disabilities. In economic downturns, Medicaid and CHIP play a critical role in maintaining access to necessary health care for children and, in some instances, parents. Low-income seniors have been able to turn to Medicaid for help with Medicare premiums and for needed long-term services and supports. People with disabilities have looked to Medicaid for help with the services they need to continue to be active members of their communities. All told, over 50 million people rely on Medicaid and CHIP for access to critical health care services that they could not otherwise afford.

In the Affordable Care Act, Congress recognized the important role these programs play in our nation's health coverage structure. One important provision of the Act ensures stable Medicaid and CHIP coverage by requiring states to hold steady on Medicaid and CHIP eligibility until 2014 for adults and 2019 for children. To date, these stability protections have worked exactly as intended, preventing states from reducing Medicaid and CHIP eligibility as well as from adding red-tape barriers to enrollment just when people need help the most.

But now, some of our nation's Governors are seeking to eliminate this important protection in the face of budget challenges. While there is no doubt that these state budget problems are serious and warrant attention, taking health care away from millions of American seniors and children is the wrong response. What the Governors propose would undercut the remarkable gains we've made in recent years in insuring our nation's children and imperil the availability of long-term services and supports for seniors and people with disabilities. This outcome would be in direct opposition to our nation's goal of reducing the number of uninsured. Moreover, cutting Medicaid would threaten the fragile economic recovery, since cuts to Medicaid translate into significant cuts in state business activity and jobs.

The economic and health care security of millions of Americans is at substantial risk if the stability provisions in the Affordable Care Act are weakened. We therefore urge you to stand firm and vigorously oppose any efforts to weaken these provisions. Our organizations are ready to work with you, with CMS and with state government to find smarter, more efficient ways to respond to state budgetary problems.

Sincerely,

ACCSES (formerly the American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services)
Alliance for a Just Society
Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of University Women
American Association on Health and Disability
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Diabetes Association
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Heart Association
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society on Aging
Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Professional Chaplains
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Attention Deficit Disorder Association
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Community Change
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Child Welfare League of America
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Dental Health Project
Children's Health Fund
CLASP
Clinical Social Work Association
Coalition on Human Needs
Colon Cancer Alliance
CommonHealth ACTION
Community Access National Network
Community Action Partnership
Community Organizations in Action
Consumer Action
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Defeat Diabetes Foundation
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Easter Seals
Families USA
Family Voices
First Focus
Health Care for America Now|
Hemophilia Federation of America
HIV Law Project
HIV Medicine Association
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lutheran Services in America

Medicare Rights Center
Mental Health America
MomsRising
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association for Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Council for Children
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Disability Directors
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Council on Aging
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Foundation for Mental Health
National Health Law Program
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Physicians Alliance
National Respite Coalition
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Senior Corps Association
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Nine to Five, National Association of Working Women
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Partnership for Prevention
PHI
Prescription Policy Choices
Project Inform
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
RESULTS

School Social Work Association of America
Service Employees International Union
Shriver Center
Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice
The AIDS Institute
The Arc of the United States
The Children's Partnership
The Every Child Matters Education Fund
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The National Consumer Voice for Quality, Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR)
The Patients' Union
Treatment Access Expansion Project
Treatment Action Group
Union for Reform Judaism
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association
Voices for America's Children
WhyHunger
Wider Opportunities for Women
Witness Justice
Women of Reform Judaism