

February 11, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader, Speaker and Minority Leaders:

The undersigned organizations are dedicated to the provision of high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans, including the 57 million Americans who rely on the Medicaid program for their health care. The purpose of this letter is to express our strenuous opposition to a series of Medicaid regulations, which collectively will hurt the ability of Medicaid beneficiaries and the uninsured to receive necessary health care services. We urge inclusion of the House provision, Section 5002 of H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which places moratoria on all seven onerous Medicaid regulations until July 1, 2009.

The impact of these regulations would be specifically targeted on providers serving America's most vulnerable children, seniors, people with disabilities and low income families through the Medicaid program. It is never the time for such actions but it is certainly the wrong time during these hard economic times.

These regulations single out public providers for drastic reductions in reimbursement and will have the likely impact of substantially reducing or eliminating critical services for Medicaid patients and the uninsured in many parts of the country. The regulations would cut reimbursement to public and teaching hospitals, which are the safety net for America's imperfect health care system and which provide emergency response capabilities, trauma care, neonatal intensive care, burn units, and psychiatric emergency care. Additionally, the regulations would erode the level of graduate medical education funding available to teaching hospitals in support of training new physicians at a time when all patients—not just Medicaid beneficiaries—face physician shortages. The regulations would also restrict what states may cover as hospital outpatient services.

Three other regulations would endanger the provision of school-based services, targeted case management and rehabilitative services, including services for individuals with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities and would hinder transportation to school for some students with disabilities. Another regulation would drastically reduce the ability of states to use provider taxes to fund healthcare for indigent populations.

We urge you to take the next step and enact legislation to stop implementation of these seven Medicaid rules and help protect America's most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Alliance for Children and Families
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of School Administrators
American Association on Health and Disability
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Foundation for the Blind
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
Amputee Coalition of America
APSE: The Network on Employment
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of Educational Services Agencies
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Black Administrators in Child Welfare, Inc.
Campaign for Mental Health Reform
Child Welfare League of America
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hypersensitivity Disorder
Children's Health Fund
Clinical Social Work Association
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Learning Disabilities +
Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc.
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Families USA
Family Voices
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
IDEA Infant Toddlers Coordinators Association
LEAnet
Medicaid Health Plans of America
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Counties
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils
National Association of People with AIDS
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Education Association
National Foundation for Mental Health
National Head Start Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
National Respite Coalition
Premier, Inc.
Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered
Service Employees International Union
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
The Arc of the United States
Title II Community AIDS National Network
United Cerebral Palsy
United Jewish Communities
United Neighborhood Centers of America
United Spinal Association
World Institute on Disability