

January 12, 2010

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

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

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
House Ways & Means Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
House Energy & Commerce
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Education & Labor
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Dodd
Chairman
Subcommittee on Children &
Families
Senate Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Pelosi and Chairmen Rangel, Waxman, Miller, Baucus, Dodd and Harkin:

As you craft the final health care reform bill, the undersigned organizations urge you to ensure meaningful access to care under the proposed Medicaid expansion by adopting the House provision to bring Medicaid reimbursement rates for primary care in line with comparable Medicare rates within four years.

While we strongly support expanding Medicaid to extend health coverage to low income individuals, we are very concerned that failure to address reimbursement disparities will weaken an already fragile network of Medicaid providers at a time when the demand for their services will be growing.

Medicaid rates average just 66% of Medicare rates for primary care services and are woefully inadequate to cover the cost of providing care. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the planned expansion will increase enrollment in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program by as many as 15 million beneficiaries. Those who rely on Medicaid to meet their health care needs include millions of low-income women, children, minorities and individuals with disabilities. The inadequacy of Medicaid reimbursement levels must be addressed in conjunction with the Medicaid expansion or we risk leaving our poorest and most medically-vulnerable residents behind despite the remarkable promise offered by health reform.

Support for Medicaid Payment Parity

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Please give high priority to ensuring access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries by adopting the House provision to adjust Medicaid payments for primary care to at least 100 percent of Medicare rates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully signed by the following organizations:

1. AFL-CIO
2. AFSCME
3. AIDS Foundation of Chicago
4. AIDS Project Los Angeles
5. AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin
6. AIDS/HIV Health Alternatives
7. American Academy of Family Physicians
8. American Academy of Pediatrics
9. American Academy of Physician Assistants
10. American Foundation for the Blind
11. American Anesthesiology Group, Inc.
12. American Association of People with Disabilities
13. American Association on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
14. American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
15. American College of Osteopathic Internists
16. American College of Physicians
17. American Hospice Foundation
18. American Network of Community Options and Resources
19. American Nurses Association
20. American Occupational Therapy Association
21. American Osteopathic Association
22. American Society of Nephrology
23. American Thoracic Society
24. APSE
25. Association for Community Affiliated Plans
26. Association of University Centers on Disabilities
27. Autism Society
28. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
29. Black Women's Health Imperative
30. Broward House
31. Burton Blatt Institute
32. California Medical Association
33. Catholic Health Association of the US
34. Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
35. Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
36. Cerebral Palsy Association of Ohio
37. Clinica Sierra Vista
38. Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
39. Coalition on Human Needs
40. Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU Healthcare
41. Community Access National Network

42. Consumer Action
43. Consumers Union
44. Council for Exceptional Children
45. Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
46. Doctors Council SEIU
47. Doctors for America
48. Easter Seals
49. Families USA
50. Family Voices
51. Harlem United Community AIDS Center
52. Harris Center for Disability and Health Policy
53. Health Care For All (Massachusetts)
54. Health Reform Program
55. HIV Dental Alliance
56. HIV Health Services Planning Council-San Francisco
57. HIV Medicine Association
58. HIVictorious, Inc.
59. Housing Works
60. La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
61. Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
62. Mental Health America
63. MomsRising
64. National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
65. National Alliance on Mental Illness
66. National Association of Children's Hospitals
67. National Association of Community Health Centers
68. National Association of County Human Services Administrators
69. National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
70. National Association of People with AIDS
71. National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
72. National Council of Jewish Women
73. National Disability Rights Network
74. National Down Syndrome Congress
75. National Health Law Program
76. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
77. National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
78. National Partnership for Women & Families
79. National Patient Advocate Foundation
80. National Physicians Alliance
81. National Respite Coalition
82. National Spinal Cord Injury Association
83. National Women's Health Network
84. National Women's Law Center
85. New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
86. Northwest Health Law Advocates
87. NYC for Change
88. Out of Many, One
89. Pediatrix Medical Group
90. Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Support for Medicaid Payment Parity

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91. Project Inform
92. Racial and Ethnic Disparities Coalition
93. Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
94. Renal Physicians Association
95. Reproductive Health Access Project
96. RESULTS
97. Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
98. San Francisco AIDS Foundation
99. Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
100. Society of General Internal Medicine
101. Southern Poverty Law Center
102. Strong Consulting
103. Tennessee Health Care Campaign
104. Tennessee Justice Center
105. The AIDS Institute
106. The Arc of the United States
107. The National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
108. Treatment Access Expansion Project
109. U.S. PIRG
110. UHCAN Ohio
111. United Cerebral Palsy
112. United Spinal Association
113. Village Care
114. Virginia Poverty Law Center
115. Voices for America's Children
116. Well Spouse Association
117. Women Together for Change
118. World Institute on Disability