

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 a key source 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 to 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,

9 to 5, National Association of Working Women

ACCSES

AFSCME

Alliance for a Just Society

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Family Physicians
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 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 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

CHADD

Child Welfare League of America

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Dental Health Project

Children's Health Fund

CLASP

Coalition on Human Needs

Colon Cancer Alliance

CommonHealth ACTION

Community Access National Network

Community Action Partnership

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 of Community Health Centers

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 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

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