



American Public Health Association

800 I Street, NW • Washington, DC 20001-3710
(202) 777-APHA • Fax: (202) 777-2534 • comments@apha.org • <http://www.apha.org>

May 21, 2003

The Honorable John Dingell
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the largest and oldest organization of public health professionals in the nation, representing more than 50,000 members from over 50 public health occupations, I write in support of H.R. 2000, the Strengthening Our States Act of 2003.

APHA is very concerned about the negative consequences state budget shortfalls are having on a variety of health services. We are especially concerned about cutbacks by states to the Medicaid program, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and other programs that provide health coverage to the uninsured. We believe it is essential that Congress assist states by enacting legislation to limit the severity of these cuts.

H.R. 2000 would provide much needed assistance and flexibility to the states and expand access to health care for uninsured residents through the following:

- Temporary assistance to states to strengthen the Medicaid program;
- State flexibility in providing coverage to their residents, including legal immigrants;
- Enhanced federal matching funds to cover low-income parents under Medicaid;
- Restoration of funds to the SCHIP program, and
- Full federal funding for low-income Medicare beneficiaries.

APHA has long supported access to health care for all Americans. We believe your legislation is one more step towards achieving this important goal. We look forward to working with you on this and other efforts to expand health coverage this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP
Executive Director