

May 14, 2003

The Honorable John D. Dingell
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2215



Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic healthcare sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, I write to thank you for your efforts to expand and strengthen the Medicaid program by introducing with Senator Bingaman the "Strengthening Our States (SOS) Act of 2003."

The bill contains a number of provisions that would allow states to expand coverage to those currently without access to health care and provide additional funds for the Medicaid program at a time when the states are in critical financial need. In particular, the SOS Act would:

- Provide a temporary FMAP increase of \$30 billion
- Restore funds to the SCHIP program
- Restore all scheduled cuts to the DSH program and provide additional funding to hospitals in extremely low DSH states
- Provide full federal funding for low-income Medicare beneficiaries below 135 percent of the federal poverty level
- Provide additional flexibility to states to provide home and community based care in lieu of nursing home care
- Assist states in expanding care to the disabled and their families by allowing spouses of the working disabled to buy in to Medicaid and covering disabled children without impoverishing their families
- Allow states flexibility to cover low-income single adults and legal immigrants

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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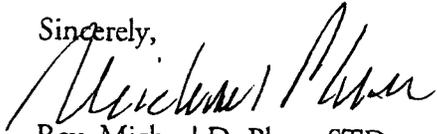
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The Catholic health ministry has long been an advocate of accessible and affordable health care for all. Your bill helps move our nation in this direction through practical improvements in the Medicaid program and providing additional funding for safety net providers. CHA looks forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress on this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael D. Place".

Rev. Michael D. Place, STD
President and Chief Executive Officer