



May 1, 2003

The Honorable John Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Dingell:

On behalf of the leading 1,500 not-for-profit hospitals and health systems allied in Premier, we applaud your introduction of the "Strengthening Our States (SOS) Act of 2003, and extend our vigorous support. As you know, strengthened and fortified state Medicaid and children's health insurance programs (SCHIP) are absolutely critical to providers' delivery of health services to our nation's most vulnerable populations. The provisions contained in the SOS Act would provide immediate assistance and support to states struggling to maintain existing program offerings. As such, we believe this legislation ought to be taken up without delay.

Shoring up Medicaid and SCHIP has never been so vital, perhaps, than at this very moment. States are under mounting financial stress with no end in sight, a dynamic that threatens current program enrollees, not to mention the provider network that serves them. The SOS Act would come to the aid of safety net hospitals by restoring disproportionate share hospital (DSH) funding to levels set forth in the 2000 BIPA legislation. In addition, extremely low-DSH states would be eligible for additional funds.

Significantly, your legislation would allow states to extend Medicaid and SCHIP coverage to legal immigrants. Eliminating the arbitrary cut-off date for legal immigrants to receive Medicaid and CHIP coverage would help hospitals and healthcare providers already burdened by a host of uninsured and emergency preparedness-related responsibilities. In addition, low-income single adults who are currently not covered under Medicaid would be so under the SOS Act.

Again, Premier extends its strong support for the SOS Act and greatly appreciates your leadership in this area. We look forward to working with you toward enactment of this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herb Kuhn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Herb Kuhn
Corporate Vice President
Premier Advocacy