



American Public Health Association

Working for a Healthier World

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March 13, 2008

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

The Honorable Tim Murphy
322 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Dingell and Murphy:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals in the world, dedicated to protecting all Americans, their families and communities from preventable, serious health threats and assuring community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities and prevention health services are universally accessible in the United States, I write in support of the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008" (H.R. 5613). We strongly support this legislation that would place a temporary one-year moratorium on seven questionable Medicaid regulations that would make significant cuts to the Medicaid program over the next five years.

APHA believes the regulations issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will do nothing to improve efficiency within Medicaid. Instead, these regulations will be a major fiscal blow to many states and will harm our most vulnerable citizens, particularly children, by preventing beneficiaries from receiving the care that they need. We support a moratorium on these regulations in order to give Congress time to conduct a more appropriate and thoughtful review of the regulations and their implications for Medicaid recipients.

The regulations not only reverse long standing Medicaid policy, but will make it difficult for states to meet the new objectives outlined in the August 17, 2007 directive from CMS that requires states demonstrate that 95% of SCHIP and Medicaid eligible children below 200% of the federal poverty level are already enrolled. In addition, the Intergovernmental Transfer regulation that would place strict limits on Medicaid payments to critical safety net institutions, like public hospitals, will undermine the safety net that many of our citizens rely on to receive health care.

Medicaid is a federal/state partnership that provides coverage to millions of low-income Americans. These regulations will shift billions of dollars in costs to the states, effectively eliminating federal participation in many important Medicaid programs. As a result, states will likely cut critical services such as specialized medical transportation to school for children with disabilities, case management services that allow people with disabilities to remain in the community, and rehabilitation services for the disabled.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important public health issue. We look forward to working with you to move this critical legislation forward. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Hoppert or Michealle Carpenter at 202-777-2742.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (Emeritus)
Executive Director