



Easter Seals

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July 26, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Chairman Rangel:

Easter Seals would like to offer strong support for H.R. 3162, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007, reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and making critical improvements to the Medicaid and Medicare programs, particularly as they affect low-income beneficiaries with disabilities. Easter Seals provides exceptional services throughout the lifespan and annually serves over one million children and adults with autism and other disabilities and their families.

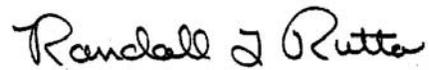
The reauthorization of SCHIP, as envisioned in this legislation, represents a unique opportunity to take a major step toward providing health care coverage for uninsured children. The level of funding in the bill would allow states to maintain the existing programs, reach out to a significant number of children who are eligible but not enrolled and provide states with a stable source of funding to allow them to move forward with their efforts. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this legislation will provide coverage to an additional five million children (including children with disabilities) who would otherwise be uninsured, and the measure would make further improvements in the existing program, such as assuring coverage of dental care and eliminating an existing discriminatory limit on mental health benefits in many SCHIP benchmark plans.

We are especially pleased that the legislation would establish a one-year moratorium from the date of enactment that prohibits the Secretary from taking any action (through promulgation of regulation, issuance of regulatory guidance, use of federal payment audit procedures, or other administrative action, policy, or practice, including a Medical Assistance Manual transmittal or letter to State Medicaid directors) to restrict coverage or payment for rehabilitation services, or school-based administration, transportation, or medical services if such restrictions are more

restrictive in any aspect than those applied to such coverage or payment as of July 1, 2007.
Securing such a moratorium has been a high priority of the disability and mental health communities.

The provisions noted above highlight some of the most important priorities to Easter Seals. Thank you for your leadership in introducing this critical legislation for America's children and adults with disabilities and look forward to working with you to secure its enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randall L. Rutta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' at the beginning.

Randall L. Rutta
Senior Vice President
Government Relations