

March 26, 2008

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

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

Dear Representative Dingell and Representative Murphy,

The National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD) applauds you for introducing the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008, H.R. 5613. This important bi-partisan legislation will stop harmful Medicaid regulations from going into effect that would disrupt critical local safety net systems. By extending current and implementing new moratoriums, localities will be able to continue to provide needed care and services to our nation's most vulnerable citizens.

The National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD) is an organization based in Washington, D.C. active on a number of fronts, including policy development, advocacy and information dissemination on best practices to its members. As an affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo), NACBHDD members are a part of the health care safety net that contributes to local systems of care for millions of Americans. Our members include county and city governments and other local authorities with responsibility for assuring that essential mental health, developmental disability, and substance abuse services are provided to vulnerable and often disabled residents. Medicaid is an integral component to local systems of care and ensures that arrays of appropriate services are available to the right person at the right time.

As you are aware, without timely action states and localities will be forced to cut other health and social services to cover the additional costs of essential services for which federal reimbursement is no longer available. In addition, delaying the regulations will allow further examination and meaningful discussion of these critical issues. We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with Congress to pass the provisions of this bill to ensure safety net systems continue to deliver needed developmental disabilities, mental health and substance use disorders services.

Sincerely,



Ellen G. Witman, MS
Executive Director



Leon Evans
Chair, Board of Directors