

Chairman Dingell on H.R. 2642, Supplemental Appropriations Legislation

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May 15, 2008

I rise today to voice my strong support for a particular provision in the supplemental appropriations legislation, H.R. 2642.

Included

in this bill is legislation that I introduced with Representative Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania. The "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008" is a simple, straightforward bill that would place a temporary moratorium on seven regulations recently issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The Committee

on Energy and Commerce recently reported the bill with unanimous support. The House then passed it with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 349 to 62.

These Medicaid regulations in question, if allowed to stay in place, would reduce or eliminate payments for services provided to vulnerable Americans and the institutions that serve them. They would affect children with disabilities, people with mental illness, those with multiple care needs, people attempting to transition from an institution to a community living environment, and people with disabilities who need services, such as rehabilitation services and case management in order to remain in their community. The regulations would also eliminate funding for school-based outreach and enrollment, and funding that helps safety net providers care for indigent and under-insured patients in our communities.

In my home State of Michigan, the rehabilitation rule would cut services for 15,000 children with special needs, eliminate services for another 29,000 developmentally disabled adults and children and eliminate access to critical community services and resources for 23,600 adults and 5,100 children who are in supported independent living arrangements or group homes.

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Administration's arguments for supporting these regulations simply do not hold water. These regulations go beyond any justifiable point to curb abuses in the system. Rather, they represent a misguided effort to shift costs to States and prohibit Federal support for legitimate expenditures on behalf of Medicaid beneficiaries.

More than 2,000 organizations representing beneficiaries, providers, schools, and States have written to lend their support to this initiative, from "A" -- such as the American Hospital Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics -- to "Z" -- the Zion Lutheran Elementary School in Nebraska. The chorus of support has been overwhelming.

I would also like to take a moment to commend Chairman Pallone and Ranking Members Barton and Deal who worked to prepare the bill for rapid action in Committee and the House floor.

I also wish to thank Chairman Obey for including the Medicaid legislation in the supplemental appropriations bill.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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