

House Approves the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008"

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NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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House Approves the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008";

Washington, D.C. — The U.S. House of Representatives today passed H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008," under suspension of the rules by a vote of 349 - 62. H.R. 5613 places a temporary, one-year moratorium on seven Administration-imposed Medicaid regulations that would make significant cuts to the program over the next five years.

Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce delivered the following statement on the House floor in support of H.R. 5613:

"I rise today in support of H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008". This

bipartisan bill is critically important to our Nation's safety net. The Committee on Energy and Commerce favorably reported it by a strong bipartisan vote of 46 – 0. I thank and commend Mr. Pallone, our able Subcommittee chairman, and Mr. Murphy of Pennsylvania for their leadership on this matter. I also thank the Committee's ranking member, my dear friend Mr. Barton, for his work in strengthening this important bill. And I thank my colleagues on the Committees on Ways and Means and Financial Services for helping us move this legislation to the floor expeditiously. The support of Chairmen Rangel and Stark is both necessary and appreciated.

“H.R. 5613 places a one-year moratorium on seven regulations recently issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The regulations would have restricted payments to critical safety net providers, such as hospitals and nursing homes, as well as payments for graduate medical education training.

“The regulations would have reduced or eliminated payments that allow children with severe mental illness to remain in family settings and payments to schools for transporting poor children with disabilities.

“All 50 Governors oppose these rules, as do State Medicaid directors, State legislators, and the National Association of Counties. More than 2,000 national and local groups – such as the American Hospital Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the March of Dimes – support this bill. They know the devastating effect these rules would have on local communities, their hospitals, and vulnerable beneficiaries.

“Without this moratorium, schools would be forced to lay off workers starting in June; hospitals and nursing homes would be forced to cut services and lay off workers as well. In troubled economic times, we cannot afford to lose good-paying jobs or cut services that enable people with disabilities to be gainfully employed.

“H.R. 5613 will postpone the implementation of these seven rules for one year, giving Congress time to evaluate the effect they could have on States, providers, and beneficiaries.

"This excellent bill is the product of strong bipartisan cooperation. Again, I want to commend Reps. Murphy and Barton for working with Mr. Pallone and myself to move this legislation forward. Their partnership has been critical and is greatly appreciated.

“I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 5613.“

Dingell introduced H.R. 5613 with Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA), on March 13, 2008. The legislation was unanimously approved by the Committee on Energy and Commerce on April 16, 2008, by a vote of 46 to 0.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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