

Chairman Dingell at the full Committee on Energy and Commerce Markup on H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008"

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

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Committee on Energy and Commerce Markup of
H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid
Safety Net Act of 2008"
April 16, 2008

I thank the Subcommittee Chairman for his work last week in moving forward H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008". I also thank Representative Murphy for his leadership on this legislation.

I also commend Ranking Members Barton and Deal who have worked to prepare the bill for rapid action in Committee. In accordance with that agreement, I will offer an amendment and will explain those changes at the appropriate time.

The moratorium on the seven regulations in H.R. 5613 is, unfortunately, necessary. The Administration is pressing ahead to implement them without a thorough and proper examination of the issues raised or the effect of these regulations on the States and the people served by this program. That is evidenced by how it chose to consider "or, more accurately, ignore - the public comments submitted on the regulations. There is little support outside the four corners of HHS for these actions.

At our legislative hearing on this bill, even GAO testified that the specific regulatory changes were not their recommendation. Moreover, on all but one of these regulations, GAO had undertaken no recent activity that would justify the measures outlined in the rules.

In the Administration's haste to enact these rules, it has put in jeopardy needed services and protections for millions of vulnerable beneficiaries, as well as support for critical safety net institutions in States that are already financially strapped.

More than 2,000 organizations representing beneficiaries, providers, schools, and States have written to lend their support to this initiative. The chorus of support has been overwhelming. We have bipartisan support from the Nation's governors and the Nation's Medicaid directors. We have support from scores of school districts and school administrators, pediatricians, hospitals, and nurses. The disability community, including those organizations representing individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities, have also joined in support.

I look forward to moving this bill to the floor as quickly as possible. I remain committed to working with Mr. Barton and Mr. Deal as we proceed to the floor. I again thank those working with us, especially the bipartisan Membership of this Committee, and look forward to continuing our cooperative efforts as we move this legislation through the process.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce
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