



Mike Huckabee
Governor of Arkansas
Chairman

Janet Napolitano
Governor of Arizona
Vice Chair

Raymond C. Scheppach
Executive Director

September 13, 2005

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Frist, Senator Reid, Chairman Grassley, and Senator Baucus:

The nation's governors have worked around the clock to develop state programs to care for the evacuees of Hurricane Katrina and look forward to working with the federal government to create a seamless, comprehensive and effective national public assistance program for those displaced individuals. Governors are moving aggressively to provide health care services to the evacuees, many of whom were previously covered by the Medicaid program, or are now homeless, jobless and displaced. The impact of this tragedy is being felt all across the country, and the American people have overwhelmingly responded with open arms and big hearts.

There are several areas where displaced individuals will need assistance, and governors will continue to do whatever is necessary to help them put their lives back together and regain some sense of stability. One of the most immediate issues for states and Congress to address is the need to provide the necessary medical care to those displaced, and to do so without jeopardizing the safety and quality of care for the evacuees or for any other citizens. So that everyone receives the care they need, governors request that the federal government ensure that states are fully reimbursed for the medical care they provide to evacuees.

It is critical that Congress pass legislation temporarily providing for 100 percent federal financing for all of the Medicaid and related health care needs for individuals displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Many of these displaced individuals lack the required identification necessary to enroll in Medicaid, yet they require urgent medical care. Therefore, immediate changes must be made to allow for the presumptive eligibility and instant enrollment with the absolute least restrictive requirements necessary in order for evacuees to quickly begin receiving essential medical care. This action is necessary for both acute and long-term care and also for the substantial administrative costs that will be incurred to help these citizens rebuild their lives without further delay.

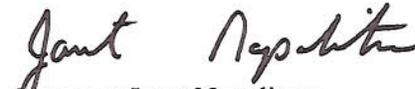
As the clean up and recovery efforts continue along the Gulf coast, it is clear that rebuilding this area will be a long-term effort. Displaced individuals may not be able to quickly return to their homes, and will likely have to stay where they are for the interim. Recognizing this fact, governors ask that this enhanced federal assistance be provided for the next twelve months, and that Congress work with states to address the long-term needs of permanently displaced populations.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you and Congress to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Sincerely,



Governor Mike Huckabee
Chairman



Governor Janet Napolitano
Vice Chair