



Dear Governor Kempthorne:

The undersigned organizations strongly oppose converting Medicaid into a block grant and capping federal funding for the program. The Bush Administration's proposal in this regard would be harmful to Idaho and the many people in our state who are served by Medicaid.

Idaho's Medicaid program protects 8,800 seniors with prescription drug coverage, and it also provides seniors with long-term care protection. Medicaid delivers critical primary and preventive care to 62,300 children in Idaho. In total, the program serves 146,200 people who view Medicaid as their health lifeline.

Unfortunately, President Bush's proposal to restructure Medicaid will cause significant harm for people who depend on the program for their health care. The proposal offers small amounts of temporary assistance to cash-strapped states – but only if those states agree to opt into a block grant structure that would provide them with less money, over the long run, than they would receive under current law. It caps funding so that states would not receive the additional resources they need when the economy turns sour, health costs increase, and more people are uninsured.

This very inflexible, capped funding approach will do greatest harm in Idaho during our periods of greatest need. It should be rejected. As an important member of the National Governors' Association working group on Medicaid, we urge you to express your opposition to this very harmful proposal.

Sincerely,

Joan Dashiell
Regional Director

*Alzheimer's Association
Oregon-Greater Idaho Chapter
1111 S. Orchard St., Suite 200, Boise, ID 83705
208-384-1788 1-800-574-1787 Fax 208-385-7191*