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May 7, 2003

Dear Governor Vilsack:

**I wanted to inform you that the Alzheimer's Association East Central Iowa Chapter strongly opposes 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 Iowa and the many people in our state who are served by Medicaid.

Iowa's Medicaid program protects 23,000 seniors with prescription drug coverage, and it also provides seniors with long-term care protection. Medicaid delivers critical primary and preventive care to 144,00 children in Iowa. In total, the program serves 269,000 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 Iowa during our periods of greatest need. It should be rejected. As an important member of the National Governors' Association working group on Medicaid, the Chapter urges you to express your opposition to this very harmful proposal.

Sincerely,

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION  
EAST CENTRAL IOWA CHAPTER

Kelly Hauer  
Executive Director

*A gift through your will or estate plan will help us assist people with Alzheimer's disease and their families.*

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