



PROTECT STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BY REPEALING BUDGET CUTS TO MEDICAID

March 20, 2003

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), I am writing to strongly oppose any cuts to the Medicaid program as part of the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution.

As you know, the budget resolution reported by the House Budget Committee would require net cuts of \$93 billion in Medicaid over the next decade. Such cuts would irreparably harm the millions of Americans now receiving essential health care coverage through the Medicaid program and devastate state and local health care infrastructure.

In particular, the cuts to the Medicaid program are devastating and will create enormous hardship. Medicaid provides health insurance to America's most vulnerable seniors, children, pregnant women, working families, and people with disabilities. Seniors receive prescription drug coverage and long-term care services through Medicaid. Children obtain vital screening and prevention services under Medicaid. Medicaid also provides crucial services such as personal care and therapy that people with disabilities need.

The Budget Committee's resolution would require the Energy and Commerce Committee to institute Medicaid cuts of an estimated \$95 billion as part of a reconciliation bill. States are currently facing a budget shortfall of about \$40-50 billion and are projecting that figure to rise to \$60-85 billion next year. At the same time, the number of uninsured and the cost of health care have increased dramatically, placing increased strain on state Medicaid programs. The population is aging rapidly and States have to do more with less. The cuts to Medicaid called for in the fiscal year 2004 House budget resolution would have to be born on the backs of state and local governments as well as beneficiaries and would even eclipse any benefit of the \$12 billion infusion of funds proposed in the Administration's Medicaid reforms.

We urge you to oppose any Medicaid cuts as part of the fiscal year 2004 budget and to ensure the elimination of the reconciliation instructions directing the Energy and Commerce Committee to institute these cuts. We also ask you to oppose any cuts to Medicaid in the final budget resolution conference report adopted by Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Naake". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Larry Naake
Executive Director