



June 24, 2004

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Dear Representative Dingell:

I am writing to express the support of the Children's Defense Fund for the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 2004, which you introduced on June 21.

The Children's Defense Fund strongly supports this measure because it is tailored to meet the health care needs of children and families who are enrolled in managed care. In particular, I want to commend you for including a number of protections that are essential for reform to be meaningful for millions of children. Your bill includes provisions to ensure that:

- Families will be able to designate pediatricians as their children's primary care providers;
- Children will be able to see specialists with appropriate pediatric expertise;
- Children with special conditions (including those which are life-threatening, degenerative, or disabling) will be able to receive ongoing care for their conditions from specialists without repeated referrals from primary care providers; and
- Independent reviewers outside of health care plans will exercise unbiased judgment when families appeal health plan limitation or denial of care.

Your bill includes critical protections to ensure that children have remedies when injury results from wrongful denial or limitation of care, and to ensure appropriate access to emergency care, specialists, and clinical trials.

The Children's Defense Fund applauds your focus on solutions to the problems faced by millions of managed care enrollees. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Emil Parker
Director of Health
Children's Defense Fund