



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

March 24, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, **I strongly urge you to reject the massive and draconian proposed cuts of \$1 trillion to Medicaid, Medicare and other safety net health care spending in the FY2016 budget resolution.** These vital programs serve both the poor and most vulnerable as well as the middle class in our nation, and we urge you to stand with us and with them to prevent cuts that would devastate these vital programs and their beneficiaries.

Public health insurance programs such as Medicaid and Medicare are the foundation of our nation's safety net and provide necessary health care services to working families, children, the elderly and the disabled. Medicaid provides essential support through a wide variety of services affecting a large segment of the population, including acute care, long-term care and home health services, neo-natal programs and maternity care. We simply cannot support efforts to slash funding for them, which will hamper the provision of health care to people of all age groups and diverse economic situations and drastically reduce their ability to be healthy and active participants in our society.

The same holds true for the proposed repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which already has provided access to affordable health care for millions. Repeal of this program would force these newly insured Americans to give up coverage that not only improves their personal health and well-being but also our nation's health care system as a whole by increasing access to care and reducing the number of uninsured.

We must also point out that radically restructuring programs like Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) into block grants and Medicare into a premium support program fundamentally alters their mission and purpose in ways that greatly undermine their ability to serve beneficiaries. As several of our nation's governors have stated, such proposals also simply shift the cost burden onto individual beneficiaries, health providers and local and state governments. While this may seem to be a temporary solution to reducing the federal deficit, the long-term effects of this strategy will be to further erode the safety net and jeopardize the health and economic safety of millions of Americans.

In closing, we would note that there are many opportunities not outlined in the current FY2016 budget resolution that could help to reduce the deficit and to ensure that our nation's entitlement programs are strengthened to continue serving those who count them. We do look forward to working with you and all members of Congress to find other ways to address the budget deficit that do not harm those who need our help and support, and urge you to ensure that our spending priorities adequately reflect that commitment.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO