

September 14, 2005

Dear Senators,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our support for the establishment of emergency Medicaid for Katrina survivors. It is critical that survivors have ready access to the full complement of physical, mental health and long term care supports and services they may need over the coming months, and that Medicaid can easily and efficiently provide.

After the events of September 11, 2001 in New York, emergency Medicaid efficiently enrolled individuals without administrative barriers and quickly provided access to needed services. Today, the Medicaid program offers the only viable vehicle to enroll and serve survivors as they enter a state or move from one location to another to pursue family reunification or economic opportunities. Emergency Medicaid eligibility can easily travel with the person, allowing continued access to health care in an otherwise unfamiliar environment.

It is incumbent on the federal government to provide full financial support for emergency Medicaid. Financially strapped states should not be financially penalized for offering their hospitality and compassion to Katrina survivors. Eligibility requirements should be streamlined and documentation requirements eased so that no survivor faces an administrative barrier to getting the health care the survivors may desperately need. We also believe emergency Medicaid should include: coverage for all survivors, not just those categorically eligible; enrollment regardless of assets or income; suspension of scheduled reductions in the FMAP for one year; and postponement the end of Medicaid drug coverage for dual-eligibles in or from the affected states transitioning to the new Medicare drug benefit.

Katrina has demonstrated the ongoing value of and need for a robust Medicaid program, and enacting an emergency relief component at this time is certainly the most efficient means of meeting the substantial needs of Katrina survivors. What is more, cutting Medicaid and other safety net programs at this time may very well leave these individuals without access to needed health and long term care supports and services, as well as other important social services. Therefore, we advocate the indefinite postponement of those elements of the budget reconciliation that pertain to cuts in entitlement programs.

We look forward to working with you over the next weeks to strengthen and improving the Medicaid program in this time of need.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO

African American Health Alliance

AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families

Alliance for Children and Families

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association on Mental Retardation

American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services

American Counseling Association

American Dental Education Association

American Dental Hygienists' Association

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

American Federation of Teachers
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Nurses Association
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Public Health Association
Americans for Democratic Action
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association for University Centers on Disability
Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Center for Adolescent Health & the Law
Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Health Fund
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Catalyst
Consumers Union
Council of Women's and Infants' Specialty Hospitals
Disability Service Providers of America
Easter Seals
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Epilepsy Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in American
Families USA
Family Voices
Gay Men's Health Crisis
Generations United
Guttmacher Institute
Health and Disability Advocates
HIV Medicine Association
Housing Works
Human Rights Campaign
Institute for Reproductive Health Access
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Laborers International Union of North America
Lutheran Services in America
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council of La Raza
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association

National Health Council
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Indian Health Board
National Mental Health Association
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Puerto Rican Coalition
National Respite Coalition
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Parents' Action for Children
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Project Inform
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
RESULTS
Service Employees International Union
Society for Adolescent Medicine
The Arc of the United States
The Children's Partnership
U.S. PIRG
U.S. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
United Cerebral Palsy
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
United Jewish Communities
USAction
Voices for America's Children
Voices of the Retarded
Welfare Law Center
Women of Reform Judaism