



July 22, 2008

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and related organizations, I am writing to express CHA's strong support for temporarily increasing the Federal Medicaid matching payments (FMAP) to states as part of an economic stimulus package.

The Catholic health ministry forms an important part of America's safety net institutions with many Catholic hospitals and nursing homes serving a disproportionate share of low-income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals every day. We have witnessed firsthand the increased financial difficulties low-income, vulnerable individuals in our communities face during an economic downturn especially in meeting basic needs including health care.

Unfortunately during economic downturns, states are often faced with budget shortfalls and are forced to make difficult decisions to cut Medicaid benefits, eligibility or provider payments at a time when safety net services and benefits are most needed. Temporarily increasing Federal Medicaid matching payments (FMAP) will help ensure the safety net remains strong and reduce the need for such cuts. Helping states and counties to cover Medicaid costs by increasing FMAP will protect low-income families from loss of medical care at a time when rising joblessness and higher costs make them particularly vulnerable.

We urge Congress to act swiftly to enact a second stimulus package that will boost our economy and assist low-income families and individuals from added financial hardship during this continued economic downturn. A stimulus package that both assists and protects the least among us is an effective form of economic stimuli. If I can be of any further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael Rodgers
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy