

May 6, 2009

THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES

Senator Tom Harkin
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

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 thank you for introducing the Community Choice Act of 2009 (S. 683) to make community-based attendant care services an alternative for Medicaid recipients who are “institutionally eligible.”



The mission of Catholic health care providers calls us to work for the full inclusion of all persons with disabilities in society. That calling is visible today in the Catholic health care facilities serving millions and millions of people in our country. In recent decades, the Church has come to a greater understanding of the needs of those living with disabilities. In 1978, the bishops issued a *Pastoral Statement on People with Disabilities*. In that statement, the bishops called upon all people of good will to work with people with disabilities to improve their living conditions and ensure that each individual is able to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable.

It is in that spirit that CHA is pleased to support S. 683 and companion legislation in the House (H.R. 1670). The Community Choice Act would offer states up to five years of an enhanced match rate (FMAP) for attendant care services and some administrative activities to enable them to develop their long-term care infrastructure. The legislation also provides funds to support system change grants to help states increase their ability to provide home and community based services and creates a demonstration project to evaluate service coordination and cost sharing for dually eligible persons with disabilities.

We commend the legislation for offering greater options to people with disabilities and allowing them to choose to receive their care in the community while also preserving the right of others to receive their services in an institutional setting if they so choose. Additionally, the bill supports quality and safety measures by requiring states to establish quality assurance systems to monitor and evaluate their community-based consumer choice services.

We thank you again for introducing this important legislation in the Senate, and please let me know if CHA can be of any further assistance in supporting the Community Choice Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Rodgers'.

Michael Rodgers
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1875 Eye Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20006-5409
Phone 202-296-3993
Fax 202-296-3997
www.chausa.org