



National
Association
of Public
Hospitals
and Health
Systems

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September 25, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH) in strong support of H.R. 976 to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). This legislation is important in addressing the health care needs of one of our nation's most vulnerable populations — children.

NAPH represents more than 100 safety net hospitals and health systems nationwide. NAPH member hospitals and health systems are on the frontlines of providing care to millions of uninsured and underinsured children and families every day. Medicaid and SCHIP are the cornerstones of our nation's health care safety net, helping to ensure access to care for millions and to finance their care in public hospitals and community health centers.

The reauthorization legislation on the floors of the House and Senate this week is an important investment in SCHIP by supporting the more than 6 million low income children currently receiving health care coverage through SCHIP, as well as millions more children who are currently uninsured. The restructuring of the state allotments, along with the increased funding amounts, will provide states with the ability to cover more children while preventing the shortfalls that have recently plagued the program.

NAPH supports the plan to use an increase in the federal tobacco tax to fund the program's renewal. We also greatly appreciate efforts to relieve some of the administrative burdens being imposed on states by the citizenship documentation requirements for Medicaid eligibility that were instituted as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, as well as the inclusion of provisions to extend optional coverage to pregnant women and provide states with tools for outreach and enrollment.

NAPH thanks you for your ongoing leadership to ensure access to health care for our nation's poor and underserved and commends you and your staff for your tireless efforts to improve the SCHIP program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry S. Gage". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Larry" being the most prominent.

Larry S. Gage
President

cc: The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Charles Grassley
The Honorable John Rockefeller
The Honorable Orrin Hatch
The Honorable John Dingell
The Honorable Frank Pallone