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ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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October 6, 2005

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**Provide Immediate Health Coverage to
Katrina Survivors in Need**

Cosponsor H.R. 3698

Dear Colleague:

Hurricane Katrina swept pain and devastation across the Gulf Coast. While the heroic efforts of medical professionals and volunteers have been able to address most of the immediate health care emergencies, Katrina survivors healthcare needs will continue as they struggle back to regain a semblance of normalcy.

I have introduced H.R. 3698, legislation to provide temporary Medicaid coverage for those individuals in the disaster areas who have either lost their job as a result of Katrina or who are now displaced and need health insurance. I urge you to support this bill as it is the fastest, most efficient way to address the healthcare needs of survivors in the near future.

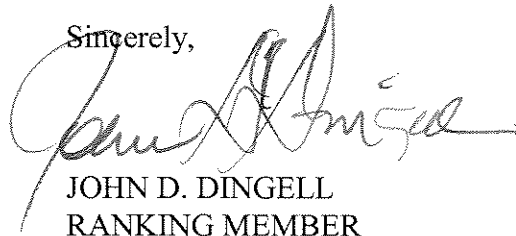
The bill would:

- Provide immediate, streamlined Medicaid coverage for Katrina survivors. This coverage is a State option, is time-limited, and is similar to what New York offered those affected by the World Trade Center disaster of 9/11.
- Ensure that "Money Follows the Person" so that no matter where survivors land, they are guaranteed coverage and their host State is guaranteed payment.
- Protect providers from the burden of uncompensated care. Providers will need not worry about who is or is not covered, or about separate billing involving an undefined and unfunded uncompensated-care pool.
- Protect hurricane-ravaged States from being left with the bill. Unlike the Administration's waiver proposal, the bill guarantees Federal funding, and will not stick Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama with the bill for evacuees' health costs in other States.

- Protect private insurance coverage. Enrollment in this temporary coverage is a choice, not a mandate. Individuals who have adequate private coverage could remain in that coverage. And, for individuals who have adequate private coverage but cannot afford premiums or cost-sharing, Medicaid is flexible enough to allow States to pay these costs to keep families enrolled in their current insurance.

While the Administration's efforts are well-intentioned, waivers alone cannot address the need created by this disaster. Congress must act. Cosponsor H.R. 3698 to ensure that no survivors are left without needed assistance, providers are fully compensated for the care they provide, and States are guaranteed Federal support for Hurricane Katrina healthcare relief. To cosponsor H.R. 3698, contact Carla Hultberg of the Committee on Energy and Commerce Minority staff at ext. 5-3641.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Dingell", written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

JOHN D. DINGELL
RANKING MEMBER