

July 26, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20015

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
U.S. Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20015

Dear Chairman Dingell and Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law- the leading national legal-advocacy organization representing children and adults with mental disabilities who primarily rely on the public mental health system- I offer our support for the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (H.R. 3162).

We are extremely pleased that H.R. 3162 makes notable changes to SCHIP and Medicare that will benefit many children and adults who rely upon these programs for essential health and mental health care. As you well know, Medicare's mental health benefit is in dire need of modernization, including ending the inequitable outpatient co-payment that beneficiaries in need of mental health services face. Similarly, many children enrolled in SCHIP face restrictive limits on mental health care and as a result are unable to realize the full benefit of being insured. Your legislation goes a long way towards addressing these barriers to care by reducing Medicare's 50 percent outpatient co-payment rate for mental health services to the standard 20 percent co-payment for other health services. Additionally, it eliminates an existing discriminatory limit on mental health benefits in many SCHIP benchmark model plans. We applaud you for these remarkable improvements to these federally funded programs.

We are also very pleased by your attention to the President's administrative proposal in the FY 08 budget that would restrict coverage or payment for rehabilitative services or school-based administration, transportation or medical services under Medicaid. The one-year moratorium you include in the legislation prohibiting the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services from taking action on such proposal is vitally important to the many children and adults who rely upon these critical Medicaid services

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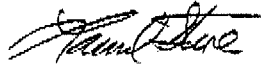
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Once again, we commend your leadership on introducing H.R. 3162 and look forward to working with you and your staff to enact it this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Blane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent horizontal stroke at the end.

Director, Federal Relations