

202-898-2858
byarwood@ahca.org

March 13, 2007

The Honorable John D. Dingell Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee 2125 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515	The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton U.S. Senate 476 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510
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Dear Chairman Dingell and Senator Clinton:

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) represents nearly 11,000 non-profit and proprietary nursing facilities, assisted living residences, subacute centers and homes for persons with developmental disabilities. Each day, our members provide high quality care to more than one million of our nation's frail, elderly, and people with disabilities.

On behalf of AHCA, I am writing to express our support for your legislation, *The Children's Health First Act*. Most importantly, this landmark legislation will provide affordable healthcare options for families to cover their children utilizing the Medicaid program. It is so vital to the well being of children to have access to all kind of health care including preventive and long term care if needed and this important legislation meets those goals.

The legislation also includes a provision that would give states more flexibility in the administration of the Medicaid citizenship requirement. The legislation continues an exemption for most people in a nursing home and for others it will make this process smooth and expeditious.

We believe the Medicaid program is an essential safety net program for children and adults needing health care and long term care. Adequate funding of this expansion of the Medicaid program should complement the current program and should not come at a cost to current services. Stable and predictable funding is essential for ensuring patient access to the highest quality long term care and services our nation has to offer. On behalf of our members, I thank you for your leadership and your commitment to the Medicaid program.

Sincerely,

Bruce Yarwood
President & CEO

cc: Daniel Gustafson
Gerald Baker

Richard Herrick
Leonard Russ