



March 18, 2008

The Hon. John D. Dingell
Chair, House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Timothy F. Murphy
Member, House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
322 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Representative Murphy:

On behalf of the 1.9 million members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), I write to you in support of H.R. 5613, the "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008." As the nation's fastest growing union, with members who assist with Medicaid applications, who serve as case managers coordinating care for Medicaid beneficiaries, and who provide care at the bedside and in the homes of Medicaid beneficiaries, we are concerned about preserving the nation's safety net. The seven regulations issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) erode the foundation of the Medicaid system by preventing beneficiaries from accessing the care they need. This legislation would place a one-year moratorium on seven Medicaid regulations that would make considerable cuts to the Medicaid program over the next five years.

The CMS regulations endanger beneficiaries' access to care by limiting payments to public hospitals, restricting support for transportation for children with disabilities, and by making unnecessary changes to school and rehabilitation services. In addition, CMS last year went beyond changing long-standing Medicaid policy by placing a directive on states requiring them to prove that 95% of children below 200% of poverty, who are eligible either for SCHIP or Medicaid, were already enrolled before states would be permitted to expand coverage above 200% of FPL. While CMS argues that these changes will create efficiencies in the program, there is not evidence to support this claim. What is known is that these changes will cause harm to our most vulnerable citizens - low-income children, the disabled, and the elderly.

Medicaid is a long-time, proven partnership between federal and state government. These regulations not only harm beneficiaries by taking away needed care, they shift billions of dollars in costs to the states. States are currently facing major budget deficits and this cost-shift will likely result in cuts to critical services. Now is not the time for the federal government to eliminate its share in this partnership, not in this time of economic downturn.

ANDREW L. STERN
International President

ANNA BURGER
International Secretary-Treasurer

MARY KAY HENRY
Executive Vice President

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March 18, 2008

Page 2

SEIU thanks you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you on this legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Tekisha Dwan Everette, Senior Legislative Advocate, at 202-730-7413.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna Burger".

Anna Burger
International Secretary-Treasurer

AB:TDE:gmb

cc: Members, House Committee on Energy and Commerce

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afl-cio, clc