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Medicaid
Health
Plans of
America

APR 20 2007

April 11, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
United States House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Dingell:

On behalf of the Medicaid Health Plans of America ("MHPA"), in am writing to indicate our endorsement of HR 1535, the Children's Health First Act.

The Children's Health First Act allows States to expand children's health coverage to families up to 400 percent of the Federal poverty level (which is \$70,000 for a family of three) through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and receive increased Federal payments. It also provides States with the tools and resources necessary to identify and enroll the six million children who, though eligible for existing coverage programs, are not enrolled.

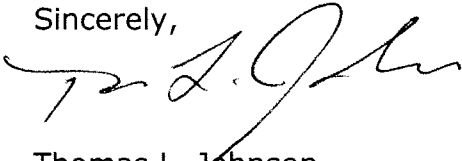
This legislation offers a new affordable coverage option for both families and employers by allowing them the opportunity to buy health insurance coverage through SCHIP. And it provides new incentives to strengthen and protect employer-sponsored coverage, something more than 50 percent of children enjoy today. Under the Children's Health First Act, States would be able to provide affordable new coverage options, including the option to offer coverage to older children. States could also offer coverage to legal immigrant children and would have new incentives to offer coverage to pregnant women. To prevent future funding shortfalls like those currently facing a number of states, the Children's Health First Act would provide future SCHIP funding based upon prior year spending indexed each year by medical inflation and a State's child population growth.

MHPA supports your continued commitment to children's health issues, especially for those who do not have health insurance coverage. There is strong, bipartisan public support for expansion of the SCHIP program, and adequate funding for such expansion. According to the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families, more than

8 in 10 votes want to increase spending for SCHIP. Of that population, two-thirds say that Congress should put even more money into SCHIP to expand the number of children covered. And similar polls by Public Opinion Strategies and Hart research showed that large majorities of Democrats (92%), Independents (84%) and Republicans (77%) say that this is very important.

Your goal of providing coverage for uninsured children through HR 1535 is a goal shared by MHPA, and we strongly endorse this legislation. We look forward to working with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "L".

Thomas L. Johnson
Executive Director