



A Partnership of The Arc & United Cerebral Palsy

September 25, 2007

Dear Representative:

On behalf of children with intellectual disabilities (formerly referred to as mental retardation), cerebral palsy and other disabilities, we want to express our strong support for the immediate House passage of H.R. 976, the House-Senate agreement to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

We are pleased that the House-Senate agreement adds important new resources to the SCHIP program to reach as many as 4 million uninsured children in moderate and low-income families. In addition we are especially supportive of funding in this legislation that will improve outreach and enrollment for uninsured children and adolescents that are currently eligible for, but not yet enrolled in, Medicaid.

We are especially pleased that the agreement includes a dental benefit for SCHIP beneficiaries and language that will hold plans accountable for ensuring that treatment for mental illness is covered on the same terms and conditions as all other medical disorders. This parity standard will help ensure that children and adolescents enrolled in SCHIP private sector plans will be able to better access mental illness treatment.

Finally, The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy strongly support the inclusion of language placing a moratorium, through May 24, 2008, on new regulations developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that would place new restrictions on rehabilitative services funded under Medicaid as well as cutbacks in transportation and administrative reimbursements to school systems for special education students served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We have critical concerns with the impact these draft regulations will have on persons with developmental disabilities and believe that a delay in their implementation will provide the time needed to carefully assess their impact and make the changes that avoid disrupting critically important community-based services for the most vulnerable Medicaid beneficiaries.

Thank you for your consideration. It is critical that Congress pass this important legislation as soon as possible to avoid any disruptions in the SCHIP program.

Sincerely,

Paul Marchand  
Staff Director

