

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
Subcommittee on Water and Power  
Subcommittee on Parks, Forests and  
Public Lands – *Ranking Member*

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,  
Elementary and Secondary Education  
Subcommittee on Higher Education and  
Workforce Training

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS,  
Co-Chair



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0307**

1511 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-2435  
Fax: (202) 225-1541

District Offices:  
738 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 110  
Tucson, AZ 85705  
Phone: (520) 622-6788  
Fax: (520) 622-0198

201 Bingham Avenue, Suite 2  
P.O. Box 4105  
Somerton, AZ 85350  
Phone: (928) 343-7933  
Fax: (928) 343-7949

<http://grijalva.house.gov/>

February 2, 2012

Ms. Cindy Mann, Director  
Center for Medicaid and State Operations  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
United States Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Voluntary Donation Program and Safety Net Care Pool

Dear Cindy Mann,

Arizona is faced with exceptionally troubling times in a health care system that has been devastated by the irresponsible decision to cut access to health care for the most vulnerable in the state. The decision by the governor and state legislature to terminate eligibility for individuals from Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) was morally unacceptable and economically negligent; the toll on the Arizona healthcare system is already apparent.

In November, an Arizona Hospital Association analysis of financial results found that:

- 90 percent of the hospitals reported an increase in uncompensated care this month over last year
- Members attributed the dramatic increase to two major changes to AHCCCS enrollment: the freeze on enrollment in the childless adult program and the freeze and elimination of the medical expense deduction program.
- If the November uncompensated care trends continue for a full year, uncompensated care costs will increase by 61 percent over 2010.

I urge you to accept two proposals that are vital to keeping Arizona's health care system intact for the people of Arizona.

The proposal for the Voluntary Donation Program will allow participating hospitals to voluntarily donate funds to AHCCCS which will enable them to receive needed federal matching funds to reimburse hospitals for the cost of providing care to uninsured and Medicaid populations. Cuts to AHCCCS already forced Holy Cross Hospital, a hospital in my district, to close its long-term nursing home. The donation program will be critical to keep the hospital's doors open to provide care for my constituents.

Additionally, as you are aware, a proposal to establish a Safety Net Care Pool ("SNCP") is under review. SNCP will provide critical funding for unreimbursed costs incurred by eligible providers to care for the uninsured and AHCCCS populations. There is clear precedent to establish such pool, as similar funds have already been established in multiple states. I urge you to take swift

action in approving this proposal, including the eligibility expansion of KidsCare, so that my constituents have access to the care they need and deserve.

These two proposals are not a long-term solution; they are a necessary failsafe to counter the painful decisions the state made. An Arizona State University estimate of an earlier proposal similar to the current AHCCCS cuts found they would cost the state more than 30,000 jobs. I am asking that CMS approve these proposals to keep hospital doors open and to stave off further economic detriment to my district and the state of Arizona.

Thank you for consideration of these proposals and your efforts to help the people of Arizona.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress