

Partnership for Medicaid

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October 19, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Charlie Rangel
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, House Education and Labor Committee

All Democratic Members
U.S. House of Representatives

Sent Via Facsimile

Madam Speaker, Mr. Majority Leader, Distinguished Chairmen, and Members of Congress:

We, the undersigned members of the Partnership for Medicaid, applaud your efforts to enact comprehensive health reform legislation and expand coverage to tens of millions of currently uninsured in our country. The members of the Partnership are committed to helping you achieve this objective.

It is our understanding that discussions about reducing the cost of the House health reform package have included an expansion of Medicaid coverage above the 133 1/3% of the Federal Poverty Level currently in the legislation, possibly to as high as 150% nationwide. We are writing to express our strong support for a maximal expansion of Medicaid eligibility and use of the Medicaid program to provide cost-effective care to more currently uninsured people. We are calling on the House Leadership and the Democratic Members of the House of Representatives to support the inclusion of such an expansion in the health reform package as it moves forward.

As strong supporters of Medicaid, the Partnership also wishes to reiterate the importance of addressing pressing issues within the program – not only to strengthen Medicaid itself, but also to ensure that Congress does not create an unfunded burden on states and localities and preserves access to care for beneficiaries. That is why the Partnership also supports maximizing the Federal Matching percentages for newly covered populations, requiring strong maintenance of effort requirements on states to protect against dollar shifting to other programs, and ensuring provider and health plan payments are sufficient to maintain access to covered benefits. These issues must be addressed regardless of the levels of Medicaid coverage in the House reform package.

Medicaid is a cost-effective program that provides essential benefits to the poorest and most vulnerable people in America. The providers and health plans that serve these populations are committed to ensuring the delivery of high quality care and, to provide nationwide coverage to the poorest amongst us, strongly support an expansion of Medicaid to the maximum extent possible over the current levels proscribed in the House health reform package, without placing unfunded mandates on states and local governments.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Medicaid Health Plans of America
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Counties
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Rural Health Association