

America's Health Care Providers Say:

“Restore Medicaid funding in the Budget Resolution Conference”

March 27, 2003

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we strongly urge the Conference Committee on the FY 2004 budget resolution to eliminate proposed cuts to the Medicaid program included in the House-passed budget resolution. We urge every member of Congress to tell the FY 2004 budget resolution conferees that the conference committee should accept the Senate version of the budget resolution as it relates to Medicaid spending.

We commend legislators for rejecting specific cuts to the Medicare program in last week's fiscal year 2004 (FY 2004) budget resolution, which passed the House of Representatives. The House-passed budget resolution, however, still includes approximately \$93 billion in cuts to the Medicaid program over 10 years.

The federal government must keep its commitment to those served by this program – the poor, disabled, elderly and children – and to the health care workers providing care to these vulnerable groups. Our nation's health care safety net must be protected and safeguarded.

These unworkable proposals should not be considered. It is inconceivable that \$93 billion can be cut from the Medicaid program merely by cracking down on “waste, fraud and abuse.” To attain such sums, the very heart of the Medicaid program would have to be drastically cut.

More than 41 million Americans are uninsured, over 9 million of whom are children. Because of current fiscal crises, over 21 states have adopted or proposed state legislation that could leave an additional 1.7 million Americans without health care coverage. Congress is debating various proposals to address this plight and other proposals to change the Medicaid program. In the meantime, however, the Medicaid program must have responsible levels of funding to ensure that patients continue to have access to quality medical care.

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Once again, we urge Congress to eliminate any Medicaid cuts in the FY 2004 budget resolution, to accept the Senate budget resolution as it relates to Medicaid spending and not further erode the health care safety net for America's most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

Advocates for EMS
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Dental Association
American Health Care Association
American Hospital Association
American Medical Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Nurses Association
American Optometric Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Physical Therapy Association
Association of American Medical Colleges
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children's Dental Health Project
Coalition for American Trauma Care
Federation of American Hospitals
Healthcare Financial Management Association
Healthcare Leadership Council
Kaiser Permanente
National Association of Children's Hospitals
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of EMS Physicians
National Association for Home Care and Hospice
National Association for Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
National Association of Urban Hospitals
National Foundation for Trauma Care
Orthopaedic Trauma Association
Premier
VHA Inc.