

May 21, 2003

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to let the tax bill conferees know that any final tax bill must include at least \$20 billion for temporary state fiscal relief, half of which would go to a temporary increase in the federal Medicaid matching rate.

The state-federal Medicaid program serves as a lifeline to 47 million low income families, elderly and disabled Americans. As organizations representing providers, caregivers, and consumers, we strongly believe that Congress must act to preserve services and eligibility for these 44 million so that this safety net program is not broken.

States are facing the worst fiscal crisis since World War II. The current economic downturn has resulted in lower state tax revenues. As a result, states are facing total budgets deficits exceeding \$60 to \$85 billion for fiscal year 2004. The number of the uninsured continues to grow as more and more people are forced from the labor market. States are being forced to cut their Medicaid budgets at the exact time that there is a growing need for services. This means significant cutbacks in services to vulnerable women and children and individuals with disabilities, in eligibility for services, and in reimbursement rates to providers. If states were to implement all the proposed cuts in Medicaid, about 1.7 million people may lose health insurance coverage.

Last week the Senate passed in an overwhelming vote of 95-3 an amendment to designate \$20 billion in The Jobs and Growth Tax Act of 2003 for temporary state fiscal relief which included \$10 billion for an increase in federal Medicaid funding or FMAP. This funding would go a long way to preserving Medicaid services for our safety net population.

Again, we urge you to call upon House leadership and potential conferees of this legislation to support fiscal relief for the states and ensure that the final tax package includes at least \$20 billion in temporary state fiscal relief, half of which would go to a temporary increase in the federal Medicaid matching rate.

Sincerely,

ACORN

AFL-CIO

Alliance for Retired Americans

Alzheimer's Association

American Association on Mental Retardation

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Pediatrics

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services

American Council of the Blind

American Dental Association

American Diabetes Association

American Federation of Government Employees

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Health Care Association
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Nurses Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP)
American Society for Deaf Children
Americans for Democratic Action
AMERIGROUP
Association for Health Center Affiliated Health Plans
Association for Persons in Supported Employment
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Brain Injury Association of America
Centene
Center for Adolescent Health & the Law
Center for Aging Policy
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Center on Disability and Health
Center on Disability Issues and the Health Profession
Child Welfare League of America
Conference of Educational Administrators and Programs for the Deaf
Consortium of Developmental Disabilities Councils
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Families USA
Family Voices
Florida Legal Services
Friends Committee on National Legislation
HIV Medicine Association
Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
International Association of Fire Fighters
International Association of Psychosocial Rehab. Services
International Union, UAW
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Lutheran Services in America
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Medicare Rights Center
NARAL/New York
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association for Home Care and Hospice
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Council of La Raza
National Council on Independent Living
National Council on the Aging
National Education Association (NEA)
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program, Inc.
National Mental Health Association
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Renal Administrators Association
National Respite Coalition
National Senior Citizens Law Center
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
New York State Medicaid Defense Group
Oklahoma Community-based Providers, Inc.
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Private Providers Association of Texas (PPAT)
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Renal Leadership Council
Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC
Society for Adolescent Medicine
South Dakota Association of Community Based Services
Spina Bifida Association of America
The Arc of the United States
The Gerontological Society of America
The MD Assn. of Community Services (MACS)
Title II Community AIDS National Network (TIICANN)
UNITE
United Cerebral Palsy
United Jewish Communities
United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO
USAction
Utah Association of Community Services
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Visiting Nurse Associations of America

Voice of the Retarded

Voices for America's Children, formerly the National Association of Child
Advocates

World Institute on Disability