



March 10, 2004

Dear Senator:

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) strongly opposes any cuts to the Medicaid program as part of the fiscal year 2005 budget resolution.

People with disabilities are the poorest minority in this country. Medicaid serves nearly 11 million people with disabilities, 7 million under the age of 65. The program is the primary source of public funding for long-term services and supports for people with disabilities of all ages. It is the largest funder of state and local spending for disability services in the country.

The estimated \$11 billion in Medicaid cuts in the Senate Budget Resolution will adversely impact people with disabilities. Coupled with the Medicaid budget deficits all states are still facing, the impact on children and adults with disabilities and their families will be severe.

States will have no choice but to cut services that literally serve as a lifeline for people with disabilities and their families:

- For people with epilepsy, mental illness, HIV, and a variety of other conditions, Medicaid is very often the only source of access to essential prescription drug coverage.
- For people with a variety of physical disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, cerebral palsy, or amputations, Medicaid usually is the only way they can get access to durable medical equipment like wheelchairs or prosthetic devices, as well as assistive technology.
- For many people with physical, mental, cognitive, and sensory disabilities, Medicaid generally is the only source of funds for them to live and work in the community with friends and families and avoid more costly and segregated nursing homes or institutions.
- For children with all types of disabilities, the services provided by Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit often enables them to avoid additional disabilities; continue to live at home with their families; make it through school; and become independent productive members of society.

- For school-age children with special education needs, Medicaid is a major source of related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that enables children to receive the education they need to reach their full potential.

Medicaid cuts are shortsighted. Medicaid services allow families to care for children at home and enable adults with disabilities to live independently in the community. Cuts in these critical services will result in costly institutionalization.

On behalf of children and adults with disabilities and their families, we urge you to vote for the Baucus Amendment to strike the reconciliation instruction that directs the Finance Committee to cut \$21.6 billion in mandatory/entitlement spending over 5 years. We also ask you to oppose any cuts to Medicaid in the final budget resolution conference report adopted by Congress.

The CCD is a working coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self determination, independence, participation, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

On Behalf Of:

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Association of People with Disabilities
 American Association on Mental Retardation
 American Congress of Community Supports and Employment Services
 American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
 American Council of the Blind
 American Diabetes Association
 American Foundation for the Blind
 American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
 American Network of Community Options and Resources
 American Occupational Therapy Association
 American Therapeutic Recreation Association
 Association of Academic Physiatrists
 Association of University Centers on Disabilities
 Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
 Brain Injury Association of America
 Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
 Easter Seals

Epilepsy Foundation
Family Voices
Helen Keller National Center
IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Fragile X Foundation
National Mental Health Association
National Organization on Disability
National Rehabilitation Association
National Respite Coalition
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
Spina Bifida Association of America
TASH
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association
World Institute on Disability

For more information, contact:

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