



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

August 25, 2011

Donald Berwick, M.D.
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Berwick:

On behalf of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), we are writing to express our serious concerns regarding pending cuts to Medicaid providers of services to individuals with disabilities. The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. While we appreciate the difficult financial climate many states are grappling with, we believe that states that have proposed to reduce (or have already reduced) Medicaid provider rates must take steps to ensure that quality of care and access to services, are and will be preserved.

We understand that California has submitted a State Plan Amendment (SPA) that includes a 10% reduction in rates to Medi-CAL providers. With cuts this deep we are concerned that some service providers could go out of business and people with disabilities would lose access to critical services. This is particularly problematic in areas that are underserved.

As demonstrated by the depth of the provider rate reductions included in the California SPA, the necessity of strong CMS oversight of Medicaid rate-setting by the states is more important than ever. As you are aware, many services for persons with disabilities are financed almost entirely with Medicaid. While some rate reductions may seem to be relatively moderate, the cumulative impact of multiple reductions in states must be analyzed to fully assess the impact on quality and access to services.

Likewise, CMS should be scrutinizing those states where cuts endanger people's ability to live successfully in the community, as in the case of certain providers that would be required to close their doors – those types of closures could force beneficiaries into state-run facilities and, in turn, even further aggravate economic hardship for the state. Indeed, CMS should ensure that states set and maintain their Medicaid rate

structures at levels to assure that there is sufficient provider participation so that Medicaid enrollees can access necessary services.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to consider the lack of provider access, and the barriers that such a problem would pose to beneficiaries, as you decide how to respond to California and other states' SPAs. As you do, please consider holding harmless providers in those catchment areas without excess capacity as a sensible approach. We appreciate your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

APSE

American Counseling Association

American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association

American Network of Community Options and Resources

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

Association of University Centers on Disability

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Brain Injury Association of America

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

Easter Seals

Epilepsy Foundation

Family Voices

Lutheran Services in America Disability Network

Mental Health America

National Alliance to End Homelessness

National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics

National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability

Directors

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Society

National Multiple Sclerosis Society

National Respite Coalition

State Associations of Addiction Services

The Advocacy Institute

The Arc of the United States

United Cerebral Palsy

United Spinal Association