



Commemorating 40 Years
Of Disability Advocacy
1973-2013

February 14, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House

Dear President Obama:

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) appreciates your continuing strong support of the Medicaid program. The undersigned members of CCD support your commitment to the program and your pledge to spare it from budget cuts. CCD strongly supports Medicaid precisely because of the program's track record for providing services that allow individuals with disabilities to remain independent, access employment opportunities and access cost-effective healthcare services, especially in times of economic turmoil. Indeed, Medicaid is often the only source of comprehensive and appropriate coverage that addresses the health care and long-term services needs of people with disabilities.

Your on-going commitment to Medicaid demonstrates a clear understanding of the program's importance to people with disabilities, seniors, low income parents, pregnant women and children. About 9 million Medicaid beneficiaries are non-elderly people with disabilities. For many individuals with disabilities whose need for health care and long term services and supports spans their lifetimes, access to Medicaid has life-altering implications; Medicaid is their lifeline.

CCD appreciates that you understand how Medicaid impacts people with disabilities –

- For children with all types of disabilities, access to the cost-effective Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit, with its screenings, services and therapies, can often make a major difference in their lives. Access to these important services is what enables them to lead healthy and more active lives; avoid additional disabilities; continue to live at home with their families; make it through school; get and keep a job; and participate actively in the community in which they live.
- For people with disabilities of all ages Medicaid is the primary public source of funding for long-term services and supports. It is the largest funder of state and local spending on mental health, substance abuse, and intellectual and developmental disabilities services in the country.
- 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 cognitive, intellectual and other types of disabilities, including autism, 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.

While the current economic situation demands leadership and thoughtful action, taking health care away from millions of America's children, seniors and people with disabilities would be the wrong response morally and fiscally.

Sincerely,

AAIDD

AAPD

ACCSES

ANCOR

American Association on Health and Disability

American Council of the Blind

American Counseling Association

American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA)

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD)

Autism National Committee

Brain Injury Association of America

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Community Access National Network

Community Legal Services

Council for Exceptional Children

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

Disability Rights Legal Center

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)

Easter Seals

Epilepsy Foundation

Health and Disability Advocates

IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA)

Lupus Foundation of America

Mental Health America

NCIL

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Health Law Program

National Rehabilitation Association
Physician-Parent Caregivers
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)
The American Therapeutic Recreation Association
The Arc of the United States
The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation
The National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities
Union for Reform Judaism
United Cerebral Palsy