



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 25, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) are writing to express our concern and opposition to H.R. 1683 that would eliminate essential protections for the most vulnerable populations currently covered by health insurance. The proposal would negatively impact the health care status and quality of life of seniors, children and people with disabilities who rely on Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to meet their needs.

CCD made the maintenance of effort (MOE) provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Public Law 111-5) and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148) a priority because of their critical importance to the health of people with disabilities. Given the economic hardships faced by the American people, the importance of those MOE provisions have only grown since the passage of these pieces of legislation. The MOE provision also prevents states from making it much harder to get home and community based services, by increasing the level of impairment needed before someone can qualify for these services, for example, or by capping or freezing enrollment in home and community based services. Rolling back these protections at this time runs counter to the interests and needs of children, seniors and people with disabilities across the country.

At a time of financial hardship among the states the proposal would cut federal funding to the Children's Health Insurance Program by a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated \$8.8 billion. In addition \$1.5 billion would be cut from the Medicaid program over just the next three years. Medicaid and CHIP are our nation's most important health care safety net programs and must be protected in times of economic hardship. Shifting the burden of costs and responsibility to the states during a recession or in the early stages of fiscal recovery will result in the inescapable consequence of reduced eligibility and services for the American people covered by Medicaid and CHIP.

It is essential that Congress maintains the protections necessary to meet the health and long-term services and supports needs of vulnerable populations. The federal government should not abdicate its responsibility to people who rely on these programs as a lifeline. According to CBO this legislation would result in complete loss of coverage for more than 300,000 Americans, among whom two-thirds are children. An additional 300,000

people would become uninsured in 2016 because of the rollback of protections included in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Beyond the human impact of the legislation, the economic impact would result not only in a shifting of the burden of care to states but directly back to the federal government and increase the federal deficit. Again, according to CBO, the \$5.4 billion of estimated federal direct spending savings would be offset by reduced revenues of \$3.3 billion. In addition, the theoretical short-term savings to the federal government would be shifted directly back to the federal government through increased outlays for premium and cost-sharing subsidies within the exchange plans. That increase in cost to the federal government of \$3.6 billion coupled with the loss in revenue under Medicaid and CHIP of \$3.3 billion results in a net loss to the federal government of \$1.5 billion if H.R.1683 were to be enacted. The plan not only eliminates essential health care coverage of hundreds of thousands of children and other vulnerable Americans, including people with disabilities but will ultimately increase the federal deficit by a billion and a half dollars*.

As members of CCD representing the needs and interests of people with disabilities the undersigned organizations urge you to join us in standing with the people whose health and long-term services and supports coverage is threatened by this unacceptable legislative proposal.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

ACMHA: The College for Behavioral Health Leadership

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association on Health and Disability

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Dance Therapy Association

American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association

American Music Therapy Association

American Network of Community Options and Resources

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

American Therapeutic Recreation Association

Association for Persons in Supported Employment

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autism National Committee

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Brain Injury Association of America

Community Access National Network

Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf

Corporation for Supportive Housing

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children

Easter Seals

Epilepsy Foundation
Family Voices
Health & Disability Advocates
Inter-National Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lutheran Services in America - Disability Network
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Assn. of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Private Special Education Centers
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council on Aging
National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
National PTA
Paralyzed Veterans of America
School Social Work Association of America
The Arc of the United States
Tourette Syndrome Association
Union for Reform Judaism
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association

* Financial information derived from the Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate of H.R. 1683, the State Flexibility Act completed on May 11, 2011 Available at:
<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/121xx/doc12184/hr1683.pdf>