

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2003

The Honorable Don Nickles
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nickles and Senator Conrad:

Medicaid provides essential health coverage to 47 million low-income children, working families, seniors, and people with disabilities. This critical safety net program also contributes significantly to state economies by stimulating employment and business activity.

As you know, the House-passed budget resolution includes a reconciliation instruction requiring an estimated \$92 billion in cuts to Medicaid funding over ten years. Neither the Senate budget resolution nor the Administration budget includes any such cuts to Medicaid.

States are currently facing the most severe budget crisis since World War II and nearly every state has proposed or enacted cuts to its Medicaid program. Any reduction in federal Medicaid funding would place millions of vulnerable Americans now receiving Medicaid in jeopardy of losing their health coverage. Federal funding reductions would force states to implement even deeper cuts by restricting eligibility, eliminating or reducing critical health benefits, and severely cutting or freezing provider reimbursement rates. As a result, Medicaid funding cuts would add millions more to the ranks of the uninsured.

We, the undersigned Senators, write to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of any Medicaid cuts in the final budget resolution. Cutting federal Medicaid funding would add millions more to the growing ranks of 41 million uninsured Americans, even as Medicaid is most needed during an economic downturn.

The Senate has recently voted overwhelmingly to support state fiscal relief efforts to keep states from having to cut eligibility or further reduce provider payments under their Medicaid programs. The size and scope of any relief efforts will be considered by the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate as a whole.

We are calling on you, as Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee, to reject the inclusion of any Medicaid cuts as part of the final budget resolution.

Sincerely,

Chuck Grassley

Charles E. Grassley
Chairman

Max Baucus

Max Baucus
Ranking Member

Orin Hatch

Jay Rockefeller

Olympia Snowe

Tom Vascok

C.H. Roth

John Breaux

Susan Collins

Ed Crist

Jim Bunning

Bill Clinton

George V. Voinovich

Jim Jeffords

H. Clinton

Tom F. Kelly

Paul Sarbanes

Blanche L. Lincoln

Robbie Stearns

Jack Reed

Tom Amodeo

Bill Nelson

John Dingell

Samuel H. Hatcher

Jim Talent

Tom Weyden

Pat Roberts

Wm D. Jenkins

Paul Coburn

Dick Durbin

Robert F. Bennett

Mark Pryor

Harry Field

Tom Harbin

Josephine

Ed Young

or Ben

Patricia Leahy

N C

Allen Peck

John

Bob Lee

Robert Baker

Cal Lee

Clayton M

Pete Fitzgerald

Lamar Alexander

Mike Dewine

James Austin Chas. Sel

John Page John

E. Benjamin John Maria Cantwell

Robert A. Nicholas Byrd Doan

Robt R. Lantry John Edwards

Jim John Robert C. Byrd

John Warner

L. L. Chiles

Bartholomew Carroll

Art Bond

John McLean

John Chiles

Patty Murray

Mack Dayton

Rick Leger

Orang Thomas

Jay Saly Antelion

Sally Charliss

Sam B. Mummick

AMM

Erin Bugh

Andy Hollings

George Allen

Henry J. ...

CRICK HALL