



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

April 6, 2011

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I strongly urge you to stand with us in defense of the poor, most vulnerable and middle class in our nation by rejecting the massive and draconian \$771 billion in proposed cuts to Medicaid in the FY2012 budget resolution, as well as billions of dollars in cuts to other programs that serve these populations.

Public health insurance programs such as Medicaid are the foundation of our nation's safety net and provide necessary health care services to working families, children, the elderly and the disabled. The mission of the Catholic health ministry calls us to be distinguished through service to and advocacy for those people whose social condition puts them at the margins of our society, and who rely on these programs. Medicaid provides essential support through a wide variety of services affecting a large segment of the population, including acute care, long-term care and home health services, neo-natal programs and maternity care. We simply cannot support efforts to slash funding for them, which will hamper the provision of health care to people of all age groups and diverse economic situations and drastically reduce their ability to be healthy and active participants in our society.

We must also point out that radically restructuring programs like Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) into block grants and Medicare into vouchers fundamentally alters their mission and purpose in ways that greatly undermine their ability to serve beneficiaries. As several of our nation's governors recently stated, such proposals also simply shift the cost burden onto individual beneficiaries, health providers and local and state governments. While this may seem to be a temporary solution to reducing the federal deficit, the long-term effects of this strategy will be to further erode the safety net and jeopardize the health and economic safety of millions of Americans.

In closing, we would note that there are many opportunities not outlined in the current FY2012 budget resolution that could help to reduce the deficit and to ensure that our nation's entitlement programs are strengthened to continue serving those who count them—many of these provisions are included in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. We do look forward to working with you and all members of Congress to find other ways to address the budget deficit that do not harm those who need our help and support, and urge you to ensure that our spending priorities adequately reflect that commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan".

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO