

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2005

The Honorable William H. Frist  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Frist:

Throughout the budget process we have been concerned about the impact to America's lowest income and most vulnerable from policies implemented to secure budget savings. We were heartened by the Senate's effort to protect these Americans by utilizing system efficiencies and eliminating waste and abuse from the Medicaid program. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives did not take a similar path. Therefore, as the Senate begins its work to reconcile the two budget reconciliation bills, we urge you to hold firm in defending the Senate's policies regarding Medicaid.


Medicaid is a vitally important program that serves almost 54 million poor, disabled, chronically ill and elderly Americans. It provides a range of benefits from screenings and vaccinations for the young, to home health and long term care for the elderly. Given the breadth and diversity of the people it helps, Congress must remain committed to the strength and viability of Medicaid.

As indicated by the strong support from beneficiary groups, advocates and providers, the Senate bill ensures that the most vulnerable among us are not called upon to carry the burden of balancing the budget. This was accomplished by adhering to a few key principles. First, the Senate bill limits the cuts to a total of \$10 billion, the savings level which the Finance Committee was instructed to achieve. The bill utilizes both Medicare and Medicaid to reach the required \$10 billion in budget savings, and holds the net level of Medicaid cuts to under \$5 billion. Most importantly, the Senate bill does not achieve any savings through policies that would negatively impact beneficiaries. We strongly urge you to continue to defend these principles and preserve the Senate's policies on Medicaid in the final budget reconciliation agreement.

In particular, we are concerned with policies included in the House bill that would impose new cost-sharing requirements on beneficiaries, alter eligibility policies for long term care that impact the middle-class, and provide unlimited flexibility to states to change benefits. These proposals were debated within the Senate and soundly rejected.

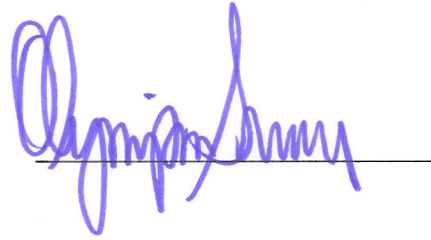
We look forward to working with you on developing a conference report that can garner wide support among Senators and supporters of the Medicaid program.

Sincerely,



Jusan Collins

Nora Colonna



Arlen Specter

Mike DeWine

