

Health Care for the Homeless Mobilizer

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council

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Save Medicaid from Drug Overcharges Call Your Senators on September 8 or 9

Members of Congress have returned from their home districts and resumed work in Washington. As news crews now clamor about the fumbled disaster response of FEMA and the vetting of a Supreme Court candidate, a far less publicized, but no less important battle is progressing to its conclusion – for better or worse – in the Senate Committee on Finance.

Eleven Republicans, eight Democrats, and an Independent are charged with reducing Medicaid expenditures by \$10 billion. This unfortunate ultimatum – a budgetary knee jerk adopted by Congress in April – is a far cry from the ingenuity and foresight required for true health care reform in the United States, but it is the current reality, and it demands our immediate attention.

The voices of *HCH Mobilizer* readers are needed to ensure that the impending Medicaid cuts do not jeopardize the health security of the poor and disabled Americans who depend on the program. Nearly all of the required savings can be realized – *without reducing benefits or increasing payments for services* – by modernizing the way that the program pays for prescription drugs.

Pharmaceutical companies overcharge Medicaid egregiously for medications, and the twenty members of the Finance Committee must be told that the time is ripe to stop such abuse. The Senate has a golden opportunity to turn an arbitrary \$10 billion mandate into an example of efficient program management and – most importantly – to protect people before profits.

ACTION:

Families USA has provided a toll-free number for advocates to contact their members of Congress through September 9. **Call 800/828-0498 today to reach your Senators**, particularly those on the Senate Finance Committee (finance.senate.gov), and tell their staff that:

- ✓ **Cutting Medicaid benefits or making beneficiaries pay more for services would hurt the most vulnerable Americans**, including children, elderly, and people with disabilities.
- ✓ **Medicaid pays too much for prescription drugs, and significant savings could be realized without reducing crucial access to medications** — by reforming the way the program pays for prescription drugs.
- ✓ **Morality compels us to protect people instead of profits.** The health security of more than 50 million Medicaid beneficiaries hangs in the balance!

Remember the impact your calls had back in March, when the Senate voted in favor (52-48) of an amendment to eliminate Medicaid cuts from its budget resolution (3/14 Mobilizer). Although regrettably, the cuts crept back in when the two chambers conferred, the Senate once again has the chance to make things right, and Mobilizer readers again can affect the outcome of this debate. Call today!

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