



Minnesota Hospital Association

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January 6, 2010

The Honorable Michele Bachmann
The Honorable Keith Ellison
The Honorable John Kline
The Honorable Betty McCollum

The Honorable James Oberstar
The Honorable Erik Paulsen
The Honorable Collin Peterson
The Honorable Tim Walz

Dear Members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation:

Thank you for your attention to and support of Minnesota hospitals' priorities in health care reform legislation. As the House and Senate bills move through the final compromise process we ask you to support a provision in the Senate bill that will allow states to begin enrolling childless adults at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level into Medicaid beginning April 1, 2010.

Despite the absence of federal support, Minnesota has long provided state-funded insurance coverage to this medically vulnerable population through our General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) program. State funding for that program and the coverage it provides is scheduled to be eliminated this year, which will leave tens of thousands of the poorest Minnesotans – people who make less than \$8,123 per year – without health insurance. When these Minnesotans need care, they will be left with only one option: the hospital emergency room, thereby driving up uncompensated costs for hospitals and ultimately shifting those costs to private insurance premiums.

The Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) is striving to salvage coverage for these residents as our highest priority at the state capitol. The provision in the U.S. Senate health reform bill will provide our legislature with a significant, albeit partial, way to refinance this critical program. Because the Senate provision would allow Minnesota to extend Medicaid coverage to all residents below the income threshold, including childless adults, beginning April 1, 2010, it would help us secure access to appropriate care for this most vulnerable population. These constituents should not have to rely on the emergency room for primary care – it is not in the best interest of the patient and it is the most expensive way to receive care.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that health care reform legislation is enacted.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Massa
President & CEO

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
The Honorable Al Franken