

HIV Health Care Access Working Group

May 12, 2011

U.S. House of Representatives

Energy and Commerce Committee

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Committee Member:

We the undersigned organizations write today to strongly urge you to oppose the Medicaid maintenance of effort (MOE) repeal bill (H.R. 1683, State Flexibility Act of 2011). As a coalition of more than 100 national and community-based AIDS service organizations representing HIV medical providers, public health professionals, advocates and people living with HIV/AIDS, we urge you to consider the harmful effect of repealing this provision on people living with HIV/AIDS and those at risk for infection.

The Affordable Care Act requires states to maintain their current Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program eligibility standards until 2014, when new, nationwide Medicaid eligibility standards take effect and state-based health insurance exchanges will begin operating. We strongly urge you to resist efforts to erode the important coverage protections that this provision is intended to ensure.

Medicaid is the single largest supporter of HIV/AIDS care and treatment, providing coverage to approximately 40% of all people living with HIV and AIDS in the United States. Allowing states to cut Medicaid eligibility places the health of millions of low income families, children, and people with disabilities including HIV/AIDS who rely on Medicaid at risk.

A relaxation of the MOE provisions is short-sighted and will leave many low-income Americans, including those with HIV infection, uninsured and without access to the care and treatment that prevents serious illness. Removing people from Medicaid will not prevent them from getting sick. As individuals will be forced to forgo medically necessary treatment, they will become sicker and more likely to rely on emergency episodic care – leading to poorer health outcomes and much more costly health care costs.

There are other strategies that states could pursue to make Medicaid a more efficient and sustainable program without harming beneficiaries. As we work together to find durable solutions, we urge you to maintain the Medicaid MOE provisions in order to ensure that health care is available to the most vulnerable Americans, including people with HIV/AIDS.

If you have any questions, please contact the HHCAWG co-chairs (Robert Greenwald, Treatment Access Expansion Project at rgreenwa@law.harvard.edu and Andrea Weddle, HIV Medicine Association at aweddle@hivma.org).

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore | AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families | AIDS Foundation of Chicago | The AIDS Institute | AIDS Project Los Angeles | AIDS Treatment Data Network | AIDS United | American Academy of HIV Medicine | Broward House | Community Access National Network | Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project | Gay Men's Health Crisis | Harlem United | Health and Disability Advocates | HIV Medicine Association | HIVictorious, Inc. | Housing Works | Moveable Feast | National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors | National Association of People With AIDS | National Minority AIDS Council | The National Working Positive Coalition | Project Inform | San Francisco AIDS Foundation | South Carolina Campaign to End AIDS | Treatment Access Expansion Project | Treatment Action Group | VillageCare