



Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

February 25, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

The undersigned members of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of national not-for-profit organizations representing nearly 60 million older Americans, applaud your leadership to sustain our nation's economic recovery and urge you to extend the increase in federal Medicaid matching rates (FMAP) included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) of 2009.

All states have seen an extraordinary acceleration in Medicaid enrollment: 3.28 million Americans have enrolled from June 2008 to June 2009. At the same time that demand for Medicaid is escalating, states have been hobbled by the steepest-ever decline in state revenues due to recession. The Recovery Act funds have been vital in helping states to preserve Medicaid eligibility, and to avoid or limit cuts to the program. This lifeline of funds for Medicaid, however, will end mid-way through most states' 2011 fiscal year budgets (December 31, 2010), when state economies will still be in crisis. The extension of the Recovery Act funds should also continue the maintenance of effort requirements. Because of this requirement millions of seniors continued to be eligible for Medicaid that often provides vital home- and community- based services benefits.

Without the continued Recovery Act funds and maintenance of effort requirements, states are likely to propose cuts to eligibility and deeper cuts to benefits to close large gaps in fiscal year 2011 budgets. It is our understanding that Medicaid reductions have already been proposed for budgets in 30 states. Such actions would put the health and independence of millions of older Americans at risk, undermine our nation's health care safety net and create a further drag on the economy just as the economy begins to show signs of recovery.

We urge you to act expeditiously to enact a six month extension of the Recovery Act Medicaid provisions, and we look forward to continuing our work with you to ensure that seniors' access to health care will not suffer as a result of the economic recession.

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Sincerely,

AARP
AFL-CIO
AFSCME Retiree Program
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Federation of Teachers
B'nai B'rith International
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Families USA
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of
America (UAW)
The Jewish Federations of North America
Easter Seals
Lutheran Services in America
Military Officers Association of America
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Association for Home Care and Hospice
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of State Units on Aging
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on Aging
National Indian Council on Aging
NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Volunteers of America
Wider Opportunities for Women

CC Members of the United States Senate

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