

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 4, 2008

The Honorable John Spratt  
Chairman  
House Budget Committee  
207 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Ranking Member  
House Budget Committee  
B-71 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

We are writing to urge the Budget Committee to strongly oppose cuts to Medicare and Medicaid in the Administration's Fiscal Year 2009 (FY 09) Budget. We are especially opposed to those cuts affecting long term care providers. We express our support for strengthening the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which care for our nation's poor, frail, elderly, and those with disabilities.

Approximately 80% of nursing home patients rely on either Medicare or Medicaid to pay for their long term care. Given that the fastest growing segment of our population are those 85 and older, our nation's need for long term care is likely to increase significantly. Providing adequate reimbursement for long term care under both Medicare and Medicaid will ensure that this growing population will continue to have access to long term care.

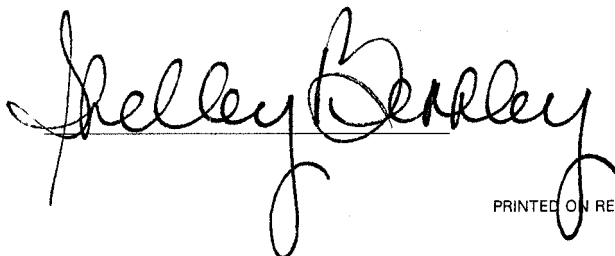
Despite the growing demand for long term care, the existing financing mechanisms for Medicare and Medicaid are intertwined and increasingly dysfunctional. Medicare and Medicaid funding comprise the vast majority of all skilled nursing facility (SNF) payments. The Administration's proposed reductions to Medicare payments to SNFs are especially egregious when the drastic underfunding of Medicaid-financed SNF care is considered. For 2007, SNFs received \$4.4 billion less than needed to cover the costs of providing care to Medicaid patients according to BDO Seidman. The Administration's FY 09 budget, however, ignores this perilous situation and calls for nearly \$24 billion in cuts to Medicare SNF funding over five years.

Recently, the long term care sector has experienced relative economic stability, allowing SNFs to enhance the quality of care and better meet the needs of its patients. These patients are experiencing more medically complex conditions than ever before and these unjustifiable cuts would therefore jeopardize this already underfunded system and further destabilize our nation's long term care infrastructure.

We respectfully request that the Budget Committee reject the proposed cuts to SNFs and continue to foster the stability of the long term care community through reasonable funding levels. Ensuring adequate reimbursements will allow long term care professionals to continue providing seniors with the highest quality care in our nation's nearly 16,000 nursing homes.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to strengthen the safety net our nation's seniors deserve.

Sincerely,



Wm. Lacy Clay

~~Tommy Shelby~~

Wendell Davis

Charlie A. Wilson

Jim Langevin

Carolyn McCarthy

Haydn Doyle

Leonard L. Bawell

Eddie Bernice Johnson

~~Bob Shriver~~

Patrick O. Kennedy

John Butterfield Jr.

Tim Murphy

Mike Ron

Joe Courtney

~~John~~

Anna Escobedo

Alue Locksack

Vern Buchanan

Chris Van Hollen

Ron Lewis

Todd Tichet

James

Phil Galt

Jim Hunter

John F. Tinning

Colin C. P. P.

Howard L. Berman

Shirley

Jenny Lewis

Ellen Tauscher

Tony Balch

Bird

Paul Szyak

Ralph West

Elaine

Richard E. Neal

Edward G. Mackey

Tom. J. <sup>E. Jensen</sup>

Rick Boucher

Pat Mey

Lois Capps

Margie K. Skrono

Jill Snyder

Jan Dr

Neil Abernethy

Becky McCallum

Paul Reynolds

John B. Jam

Tom Hill

John Hall

Ron Kind

Steve Kayano

Tom P. Kelly

Kell Glick

Bill DeLahunta

John Banow

Jim Prustal

Bill Wray

Stephanie Harseth Sandlin

John W. Oliver

Sam Tan

Niki Tongas

Leslye B. Maloney

Madeline J. Randall

Steve Cohen

Christopher P. Gray

Heather L. Lison

Jane Sins

Janet Lewis

John T. Solaya

Jim Moran

*John Doe*

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List of Signatures:

Berkley

Abercrombie  
Allen  
Arcuri,  
Baldwin  
Barrow  
Berman  
Bordallo  
Boswell  
Boucher  
Buchanan  
Butterfield  
Capps  
Carney  
Clay  
Cohen  
Conyers  
Courtney  
DeLahunt  
Doggett  
Ellison  
English  
Eshoo  
Etheridge  
Farr  
Graves  
Hall, John  
Hirono  
Herseht Sandlin  
Jefferson  
Johnson, E.B  
Kagen  
Kennedy  
Kind  
Langevin  
Larson  
Levin  
Lewis, Jerry

Capito

Lewis, Ron  
Loebsack  
McCarthy  
McCollum  
McNerney  
Maloney  
Manzullo  
Markey  
Moore  
Moran  
Murphy, Christopher  
Murphy, Tim  
Neal  
Oberstar  
Olver  
Ortiz  
Peterson, Collin  
Price, David  
Ramstad  
Ross  
Salazar  
Shuler  
Sires  
Space  
Snyder  
Stupak  
Tauscher  
Tiahrt  
Tierney  
Towns  
Tsongas  
Van Hollen  
Walz  
Wexler  
Wilson, Charles  
Wilson, Heather  
Young, C.W. Bill