

September 2, 2008

The Honorable James Clyburn  
House Majority Whip  
2135 Rayburn House Office Building  
District of Columbia 20515-4006

Dear Representative Clyburn:

On behalf of the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, I strongly encourage you to support the enactment of a one-year moratorium on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) proposed rule to cut the federal share for the Medicaid Outpatient Clinic and Hospital Services. In addition, we ask that you include in the second emergency supplemental stimulus package a temporary increase to the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). With Congress planning to adjourn by the end of September, timely action now will protect the health care of millions of vulnerable Americans, including those with mental illness and substance use disorders, and would be a prudent and responsive way to stimulate the economy.

The National Council is an association of almost 1,400 community-based mental health and addiction treatment organizations from around the country. Our members serve as the public sector safety net for almost six million children and adults living with mental illness and addiction. Our members provide a wide variety of clinical, rehabilitative and support services that facilitate community integration and recovery.

We strongly urge you to support a one year moratorium on CMS' Proposed Rule, which would narrow the definition of outpatient hospital services and limit Medicaid reimbursement under the hospital outpatient benefit to only those services covered by Medicare. A one-year delay to the Proposed Rule would provide much needed temporary fiscal relief.

Additionally, as Congress considers a second emergency supplemental stimulus appropriation package, we ask you to fight for the inclusion of a temporary increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). An increase in the federal match for Medicaid is a potent economic stimulus. According to Mark Zandi, Chief Economist for Moody's Economy.com, a \$1 increase in federal Medicaid spending and grants to states would boost the GDP by \$1.36. This in turn protects and generates jobs, wages and business activity because of a new injection of funding into state budgets. States that receive a temporary increase in federal Medicaid match could see job, wage and economic growth as a result.

I strongly urge you to push for the enactment of a one-year moratorium on CMS' Medicaid Outpatient Proposed Rule, and to advocate for the inclusion of a temporary boost in the Medicaid federal share in a second emergency supplemental stimulus package before Congress adjourns for the year.

Sincerely,



Linda Rosenberg, MSW  
President and CEO