March 8, 2004

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist
Senate Dirksen Office Building SD-461
Washington, DC 20510

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle
Senate Hart Office Building SH-509
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Frist and Daschle,

The undersigned organizations strongly oppose the Medicaid cuts included in the fiscal year 2005 budget resolution, especially the reconciliation instructions that require the Finance Committee to cut entitlement spending. During the Budget Committee mark up, Chairman Nickles stated that his budget plan **assumes that the Finance Committee will cut Medicaid $11 billion over the next five years**. Such cuts would irreparably harm the more than 51 million Americans who rely on Medicaid for their health care lifeline, and reduce reimbursement to critical health care providers.

Medicaid provides health insurance to America's most vulnerable seniors, children, pregnant women, working families, and people with disabilities. Seniors receive prescription drug coverage and long-term care services through Medicaid. Children obtain vital screening and prevention services under Medicaid. Nearly one in ten American women—and one-third of all poor women—rely on the Medicaid program for their health care. Medicaid also provides the crucial services such as long term supports and services and therapy that people with disabilities need.

The Senate Budget Committee's resolution would require deep entitlement cuts as part of a reconciliation bill, and the $11 billion cut to Medicaid is assumed to be a part of that bill. Such devastating cuts will create enormous hardship for states and threaten the health security of the Americans who rely on Medicaid for their essential health care services. These cuts would occur as states are beginning to recover from the most severe budget crisis since World War II. States need more, not less, federal Medicaid funding to sustain their current Medicaid programs and avoid greater cutbacks that add to the ranks of the uninsured and further cost shifts to health care providers.

We urge the Senate to oppose any Medicaid cuts in the fiscal year 2005 budget and to actively work to eliminate the reconciliation instructions requiring these unacceptable cuts. We also ask you to oppose any cuts to Medicaid in the final budget resolution conference report adopted by Congress.

Sincerely,

Advancing Independence

Advocates for Children and Youth, Inc.
AIDS Action
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families
AIDS Treatment Data Network
Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Alliance for Children and Families
Alliance for Retired Americans
Alzheimer's Association
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Mental Retardation
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
American Congress of Community Support and Employment Services
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Council of the Blind
American Counseling Association
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
American Dental Hygienists' Association
American Diabetes Association
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American Foundation for the Blind
American Friends Service Committee
American Geriatrics Society
American Health Care Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
American Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
American Social Health Association
American Society of Transplant Surgeons
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Americans for Democratic Action
Association for Gerontology and Human Development at Historically
Black Colleges and Universities
Association for the Advancement of Psychology
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Brain Injury Association of America
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Cedar Lake Lodge, Inc. and Cedar Lake Residences, Inc.
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Center on Disability and Health
Central Conference of American Rabbis
CHAMP, Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Dental Health Project
Children's Diagnostic & Treatment Center, Inc.
Children's Foundation
Church Women United
Community Advocates for Developmentally Disabled (CADD)
Community Healthcare Network
Concerned Citizens for the Mentally Retarded
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
Council for Health and Human Service Ministries
Council of Women's and Infants' Specialty Hospitals
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Disability Service Providers of America
Easter Seals
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action
Epilepsy Foundation
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Families USA
Family Voices
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc.
Generations United
Gray Panthers
Helen Keller National Center
HIV Medicine Association
I Am Your Child
Institute for Reproductive Health Access
International Union, UAW
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Legal Action Center
Lutheran Network for Justice Advocacy
Lutheran Services in America
March of Dimes
Medicaid Matters New York
NAADAC - The Association for Addiction Professionals
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Adult Day Services Association
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association for Home Care & Hospice
National Association for Retired Federal Employees (NARFE)
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA-US)
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers
National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
National Association of State Units on Aging
National Association of Urban Hospitals
National Center for Assisted Living
National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform
National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)
National Coalition on Deaf-Blindness
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council for Community Behavioral Health Care
National Council on Independent Living
National Council on the Aging
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Education Association
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National Fragile X Foundation
National Health Law Program
National Immigration Law Center
National Mental Health Association
National Minority AIDS Council
National Organization on Disability
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Rehabilitation Association
National Respite Coalition
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Parents & Associates Advocate Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Project Inform
Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Spina Bifida Association of America

State Associations of Addiction Services
The Arc of the United States
The National Indian Council on Aging
UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies
Union for Reform Judaism
United Cerebral Palsy
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Jewish Communities
United Spinal Association
USAction
Voice of the Retarded
Voices for America's Children
Volunteers of America
Welfare Law Center
Women of Reform Judaism
World Institute on Disability