

America's Health Care Providers

December 16, 2004

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We sincerely appreciate your leadership in working toward a strong and healthy America, and we value your continued support of the Medicare and Medicaid programs on which so many seniors, children and those in need of America's health care safety net depend.

It was through your determination and resolve that landmark Medicare legislation was enacted one year ago this month. Furthermore, the fact that you did not include provider payment reductions in previous budgets is a reflection of your leadership and your understanding of the importance of the Medicare program. As we approach the 40th anniversary of the enactment of Medicare, we applaud your continued support for a program that is the bedrock of care for growing numbers of Americans.

On behalf of America's health care providers, we are writing to strongly urge that in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 budget you do not include any reductions on the rate of growth or propose caps on Medicare or Medicaid spending. More than 40 million seniors and people with disabilities depend on Medicare. More than 52 million vulnerable Americans, many of whom are children and seniors, rely on Medicaid. With many states in fiscal crisis, Medicaid reductions at the federal level would drastically unravel an already frail health care safety net. Similarly, Medicare must be able to meet increasing needs of an aging population that is growing in numbers. The federal government must keep the commitment our society has made to the poor, disabled, elderly and children.

We ask that you recognize in your (FY) 2006 budget proposal that the stability and strength of both Medicare and Medicaid are critical to meeting the health care needs and long-term care needs of Americans today and in the future.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Dental Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Health Care Association
American Hospital Association
American Psychiatric Association
Association for Community Affiliated Plans
Association of American Medical Colleges
Catholic Health Association of the United States

Eli Lilly and Company
Federation of American Hospitals
National Association of Children's Hospitals
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
National Association of Rural Health Clinics
National Center for Assisted Living
Premier
Renal Physicians Association
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Hospital Medicine
VHA Inc.

cc: Office of Management and Budget