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July 17, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus:

On behalf of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems, and other health care organizations, and our 37,000 individual members, I am writing to express our strong support for The Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2007. We applaud your hard work in crafting this bipartisan legislation with Senators Grassley, Rockefeller and Hatch.

The Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2007 builds on the successful State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that has been instrumental in providing health care coverage to more than 6 million low-income children. Your legislation will enable an additional 3.3 million uninsured children, most of whom are eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP but currently not enrolled, to receive health care coverage. The restructuring of the state allotments, along with the increased funding amounts, will provide states with the ability to cover more children while preventing the shortfalls that have recently plagued the program.

We support your plan to use an increase in the federal tax on tobacco to fund the program's renewal. We also appreciate your efforts to relieve some of the administrative burdens being imposed on states by the citizenship documentation requirements for Medicaid eligibility that were instituted as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, as well as the inclusion of provisions to extend optional coverage to pregnant women.

Thank you for your tireless efforts to improve the SCHIP program and provide uninsured, low-income American children with the health care coverage they need and deserve. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of The Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act of 2007.

Sincerely,

Rick Pollack
Executive Vice President

