

May 30, 2006

The Honorable  
United States House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear

On behalf of the Illinois Hospital Association and our two hundred members throughout Illinois, I respectfully ask you to join your Republican House colleagues in signing the letter being circulated by Rep. Rick Renzi (R-AZ) urging HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt to use flexibility in crafting the regulations to help determine eligibility of Medicaid applicants and current Medicaid recipients.

As the letter notes, the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA), Section 6036, directs that, beginning July 1, 2006, both new applicants and current Medicaid recipients must display “satisfactory documentary evidence” of U.S. citizenship or nationality to qualify for Medicaid benefits. However, the DRA also allows the Secretary to designate other documents that can also serve as acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship.

In addition, the letter proposes an important measure, allowing for “presumptive eligibility” for people who do not have the capabilities to obtain the required identifying documents, such as Native Americans, Alzheimer’s patients, the homeless, mentally impaired, older people who do not have written birth documentation, and people involved in emergency situations where their identification documentation was lost.

We agree that an “inflexible documentation policy” would be a great disservice to the people whom government has committed to serve and protect. Medicaid is the health care safety net for millions of our most vulnerable people. It is vital that new regulations are written so as not allow the exclusion of people who need and rightfully qualify for Medicaid benefits but simply cannot produce specific paperwork.

For these reasons, we urge you to weigh-in on this issue and sign Rep. Renzi’s “Dear Colleague” letter. Please contact me if you have questions or if IHA may be of any assistance to you or your staff.

Yours truly,

Howard A. Peters III  
Senior Vice President

cc: Health Care Legislative Assistant