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The Patient's Voice | since 1996

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April 22, 2010

The Honorable Bill Ritter  
Governor, State of Colorado  
136 State Capitol  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Governor Ritter:

National Patient Advocate Foundation (NPAF), a national non-profit organization, is the voice for millions of patients who have sought care after a diagnosis of a chronic, debilitating or life-threatening illness. Our mission is to improve access to, and reimbursement for, high-quality, affordable health care. On behalf of those patients who encounter obstacles in accessing health care daily, we would like to urge you to exercise a line item veto of a \$17.9 million reduction in Medicaid funding passed recently by the Colorado legislature as part of the budget for the coming fiscal year. This cut primarily reflects a 1% reimbursement reduction for most Medicaid providers which we fear could lead to fewer Medicaid providers.

The advocacy activities of NPAF are informed and influenced by the experience of patients who receive case management services from our companion organization, the Patient Advocate Foundation, which provides professional case management services to patients with chronic, debilitating or life-threatening conditions. In 2009, PAF resolved 55,384 patient cases, 648 of them from Colorado, and received more than 4 million inquiries from patients, including 46,998 from Colorado. Medicaid cases accounted for 7.66% of the Colorado total and Medicare accounted for 29.20% of the Colorado caseload.

As of February 2010, Colorado state Medicaid program covered 501,596 low-income families and children. From June 2007 to June 2009 the adult enrollment in the Colorado state Medicaid program rose 15.4% compared to a 9.5% national average, and the child enrollment rose 28.4% compared to a 12.1% over the same period nationally. In 2007-2008, 16.2% of the Colorado population was uninsured, including 238,400 adults and 85,800 children who would be eligible for Medicaid in 2014 under the recently passed federal healthcare reform legislation. It seems unwise to be reducing Medicaid reimbursements, and consequently the number of providers willing to treat the Medicaid population, just as many new individuals are about to be added to the program.

The Honorable Bill Ritter

April 22, 2010

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While we understand the difficult budget challenges facing the State of Colorado, we also know that quality health care begins with the ability to locate a physician and other medical providers. Currently, Medicare physicians are living under the continual threat of a 21.2% decrease in reimbursements due to the failure of the U.S. Congress to provide a permanent solution to the Medicare reimbursement formula. To add to this uncertainty, a 1% reduction in Medicaid payments and the possibility that the private plans might follow suit, is to pose a serious threat to access to physicians for the vulnerable Medicaid population.

We appreciate your consideration of these views and look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Davenport-Ennis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

NancyDavenport-Ennis  
CEO and President

cc: Grayson Fowler, Executive Vice President of Government Affairs, NPAF  
Mark Stephens, Representing the NPAF Patient Voice Network and State Policy  
Liaisons