



May 14, 2009

Dear California Representative:

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Sacramento
California
95814

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The California State Association of Counties requests your co-sponsorship of the bipartisan *Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act of 2009* (H.R. 2209). The bill would re-establish the responsibility of the federal government to assist in financing the medical expenses of incarcerated individuals who have not yet been adjudicated. California's counties are responsible for covering the medical expenses of individuals in their jails or juvenile detention facilities, even those who await trial. As soon as an individual enters a county jail, he/she loses federal health benefits, including Medicaid, Medicare and Supplemental Security Income.

Because federal coverage is severed at the time of incarceration, many individuals also have difficulty in reinstating coverage upon re-entering society. Disrupting the continuity of care is not only detrimental to the individual, it becomes more costly to provide the necessary care when he/she delays treatment due to being uninsured.

For example, in Sacramento County an analysis of the 4400 pre-sentenced inmates in their two facilities found that 10% of their population was eligible upon entry into the facilities. The annual cost of healthcare to this population is approximately \$2.36 million annually. If Medicaid was extended into the facilities this would provide a much needed revenue stream for the County for this mandated service. In addition, the extension of Medicaid into the jail facilities also provides Counties the opportunity to apply for various grants which are tied to Medicaid funding such as the recent stimulus monies for an electronic health record and more traditional public health grants for illnesses such as Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

Counties in many states serve as the health safety net for those individuals who have no public or private insurance. The elected county officials understand that responsibility and meet those needs. Federal coverage for those who are insured, however, should not be arbitrarily cut off as soon as a person enters a detention facility.

H.R. 2209 assists California's counties by ensuring that federal health benefits continue while individuals await adjudication. We urge your support of the legislation. To cosponsor the bill, please contact Amye Greene in Representative Hastings' office at amyegreene@mail.house.gov, Sery Kim in Rep. Burgess' office at sery.kim@mail.house.gov or Rob Saunders in Representative Holt's office at robert.saunders@mail.house.gov.

If you have further questions about our position, please contact Tom Joseph, CSAC Washington Representative at tj@wafed.com or 202-898-1444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul McIntosh".

Paul McIntosh
Executive Director