



December 18, 2012

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the over 68,000 members of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), true partners in women's health, we urge Congress and the Administration to find common ground during these difficult fiscal times without sacrificing the nation's public health safety net, including the Medicaid program. Medicaid covers approximately 41 percent of all births in the US today. Over 21 million women who otherwise could not afford annual well woman exams or prenatal care rely on the Medicaid program.

We know that women without regular access to health care are less likely to receive regular pap tests, mammograms, and other care that help prevent costly and sometimes fatal diseases. Uninsured women with breast cancer are 30-50 percent more likely to die from the disease. Uninsured women are also three times less likely to have had a Pap test in the last 3 years, with a 60% greater risk of late-stage cervical cancer diagnosis. Lack of adequate prenatal care increases the risks of having low birth-weight or preterm babies, neonatal mortality, infant mortality and maternal mortality. Inadequate prenatal care costs our health care system - \$26 billion every year in preterm births alone.

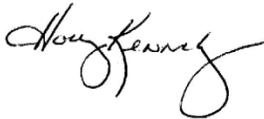
The importance of the Medicaid program to women and newborns cannot be overstated. This vital public health program must be protected and strengthened. We ask you to reject proposals that would only shift costs to the states. States would likely respond by cutting eligibility levels, benefits, or provider reimbursements, any of which would harm women's access to care and undermine providers' efforts to implement quality improvement initiatives that require upfront investments in health information technology and data collection.

We recognize that there is room for improvement in delivering cost-effective healthcare for women and newborns. The Medicaid population is younger, with a high prevalence of smoking and illicit drug use and late enrollment into prenatal care, placing them at higher risk for adverse birth outcomes. We believe that there is a role for Congress and States to support provider efforts to improve the quality, access, and reliability of maternity care for women and their newborns in the Medicaid program while ultimately lowering the cost. Pursuing these objectives should allow certified nurse-midwives and

ob-gyns to work together to better coordinate care and increase the use of best practices. Preservation of the Medicaid program will be essential to meeting these goals.

Please feel free to contact ACNM's Federal Representative, Patrick Cooney, at 202-347-0034 or via email at Patrick@federalgrp.com, or ACOG's Director of Federal Affairs, Nevena Minor, at 202-314-2322 or nminor@acog.org if you have questions regarding Medicaid and its role in addressing the needs of women.

Sincerely



Holly Powell Kennedy, CNM PhD FACNM FAAN
ACNM President



James T. Breeden, MD, FACOG
ACOG President