



February 19, 2014

The Honorable Jay Rockefeller
U.S. Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

On behalf of the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU), I am writing to express our support for the S.1980 - *Medicaid and CHIP Continuous Quality Act of 2014* (MCQA). Your leadership will ensure that Americans who need Medicaid and CHIP will have uninterrupted health care coverage, which will help improve the efficiency and continuity of care for the tens of millions of individuals on these programs. We look forward to working with you to make this legislation a reality.

Your proposal for a 12-month continuous enrollment period will dramatically improve continuity of coverage for enrollees. We also believe that, at a time when states and local agencies are looking for solutions to reduce administrative cost burdens, 12-month continuous enrollment will help to further reduce administrative expenses caused by the cycle of enrollment and disenrollment, or “churning,” in the Medicaid program. Second, MCQA will require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish standardized quality measures of the care provided to Medicaid and CHIP beneficiaries, thereby allowing beneficiaries and state and federal governments to compare the quality of care provided. Incentives for states to improve the quality of care provided will assist states as they work to improve their programs.

ACU is concerned that millions of people enroll in Medicaid and CHIP each year, only to subsequently lose their coverage—despite still being eligible—because of inefficient and cumbersome paperwork and other reporting requirements. Additionally, many individuals lose their coverage due to short-term income fluctuations which may create a disincentive for earning higher incomes. These coverage disruptions negatively affect how health care services are provided and can seriously impact the health status of these individuals. These interruptions in coverage also result in higher avoidable administrative costs for states, providers and health plans. Many hospitals, health centers, physicians and plans hire workers who spend most or all of their time on eligibility verification and assistance. Streamlining eligibility re-verification requirements would free up significant resources better devoted to the clinical arena.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important piece of legislation. The *Medicaid and CHIP Continuous Quality Act of 2014* offers a common-sense solution to modernize the Medicaid and CHIP programs and we are happy to lend our support for this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance to you on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Kennedy, MPH
Executive Director