



News Release

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PEDIATRICIAN URGES CONGRESS: BLOCK MEDICAID CUTS

New regulations limiting benefits cause “significant damage to children,” warns Dr. Marsha Raulerson of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Washington, D.C.—The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), representing more than 60,000 pediatricians, in U.S. House testimony today urged Congress to block cuts in Medicaid that could leave millions of vulnerable children without the health care they need. The AAP called on Congress to quickly pass H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act.

Regulations proposed by the Bush administration would cut Medicaid funding to the states by an estimated \$50 billion over the next five years. Essential services on the chopping block include:

- School involvement in Medicaid, including critical enrollment and health-care services, such as providing medications during school hours;
- Rehabilitative services, curtailing the kind of aid Medicaid recipients can receive;
- Case management services, which are especially crucial for the most vulnerable children, those in foster care or with special needs.

“The timing of these regulations could not be worse,” Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, testifying on behalf of the AAP, told the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Health Subcommittee Thursday. As many as 70% of Raulerson’s young patients at Lower Alabama Pediatrics, in tiny Brewton, Alabama, rely on Medicaid for their health-care coverage. Without that coverage, patients like 4-month-old Shakira, a smiling and cooing baby whose stomach swelling led Raulerson to diagnose a rare liver tumor, risk falling through the cracks. “This child is going to need many services from Medicaid, including chemotherapy, surgery, transportation (she is [receiving treatment] 200 miles from home) and case management to see she gets the care she so desperately needs,” Raulerson said.

“Children, and especially the most vulnerable children with special health-care needs must not be thrown overboard,” Raulerson testified, urging support for H.R. 5613. “Congress must ensure that no child who is currently covered under Medicaid loses his or her access to care as a result of these administrative actions.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.