September 25, 2017

Dear New York State Congressional Delegation:

Please oppose the Graham-Cassidy bill. The cuts to Medicaid contained in this legislation jeopardizes health and health care of New York’s most vulnerable children.

New York’s Medicaid program provides important health coverage for more than two million children – including 84% of children living in poverty and 100% of children in foster care. Schools are a critical part of where children receive services, particularly our students with disabilities and our students from low-income families. The need is so great that New York’s schools relied on over $273 million in Medicaid funding to provide health services in 2015.

The primary responsibility of schools is to provide students with a high-quality education, yet we know that children cannot learn to their fullest potential with unmet health needs. With Medicaid funding, school districts provide critical health and disability services to ensure that all children are ready to learn and able to thrive. These services are delivered effectively and efficiently since school is where children spend their days. Of course, Medicaid also helps to ensure that our students can access necessary care outside of school, including immunizations; physicals; as well as primary, mental, dental and other necessary care.

School districts use Medicaid funds in a variety of ways to help support learning and development, for example:

- Provide services (e.g. developmental, hearing and vision screenings, behavioral health care and specialized therapy) to students and cover the cost of health professionals (e.g. speech-language pathologists, school nurses, school psychologists, social workers).
- Help pay for school-based health centers.
- Cover costs of services for students with disabilities and special education needs.

The Medicaid cuts contained in Graham-Cassidy will harm the health of children in many ways – from families losing health insurance to reducing access to health providers. The loss of critical health services provided in schools would be one more blow to the health, well-being, and future of New York’s children.

Sincerely,

Kate Breslin
President and CEO
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy

Timothy G. Kremer
Executive Director
New York State School Boards Association
Medicaid in Schools

Overall Data

Nationally, Medicaid covers nearly 37 million children.\(^1\)

Medicaid has supported the provision of certain medical services in schools for nearly 30 years.\(^2\)

Schools receive approximately $4 billion a year in Medicaid funding which they use to provide a range of services including: psychiatric, mobility and vision, speech-language pathology, and other needed services.\(^3\)

New York Data

- Medicaid covered 1,805,600 New Yorkers 0-18 years old in FY 2015.\(^4\)
- The total Medicaid expenditures for school based services was $273,563,018 in FY 2015.\(^5\)
- There are 252 approved & operating school-based health centers.\(^5\)
- 181,569 students are enrolled in a school-based health center.\(^7\)
- 450,048 school age children with disabilities received some form of special education programs and/or services.\(^8\)

How the Money is Used

- Provides free care by qualified clinician to students in need\(^9\)
- Helps pay for the cost of school-based health centers\(^10\)
- Creates resources for families about Medicaid programs\(^11\)
- Covers cost of services students w/ disabilities & special education needs\(^12\)

This can be carried out through programs like the Preschool/School Supportive Health Services Program (SSHSP) which provides Medicaid funds to cover the cost of services for disabled students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).\(^13\) The SSHSP covers qualified students aged 3-21.\(^14\)

Medicaid Benefits Students in Many Ways\(^15\)

- Do better in school
- Miss fewer school days due to illness or injury
- More likely to finish high school, attend college, and graduate from college
- Have fewer emergency room visits and hospitalizations as adults
- Earn more as adults

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