



June 26, 2017

The Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Schumer,

On behalf of the New York State School Boards Association, I am writing at this time to share our strong opposition to any healthcare reform provisions that would radically change the Medicaid funding structure and repeal the Medicaid expansion that has helped schools provide necessary health services to millions of children.

Currently, Medicaid operates as a federal/state partnership. This partnership, among other things, allows for Medicaid coverage for almost 37 million children nationwide. In fact, children make up almost half of all Medicaid beneficiaries. Public school districts have depended on Medicaid funding for more than thirty years. In fact, schools nationwide receive approximately \$4 billion in Medicaid funding each year. New York school districts alone receive more than \$136 million in Medicaid funds. These funds help school districts provide critical health services such as: speech-language pathology; audiology services; occupational therapy; school psychology services; assistive technology devices; nursing services; mobility and vision services, and psychiatric services.

Once a state has authorized a public school district to become a Medicaid provider, public school districts most often receive and use Medicaid funds in four ways:

Provision of Individualized Education Plan Direct Services: School districts use Medicaid funds to provide medically related education services and special education services to eligible students with disabilities;

Medicaid Outreach: The federal government requires states to conduct outreach to individuals to educate and inform them about Medicaid. School districts can and do assist the state with this outreach to families;

Provision of Free Care: Schools can use Medicaid funding to provide certain medical services to a Medicaid eligible student and are performed by a qualified medical clinician, such as a school nurse; and

Support for School Based Health Centers: School based health centers often access Medicaid to help offset the cost of services. These centers provide health related services in some of our state's poorest school districts. Improving the overall health of those students leads to fewer absences and improved academic performance.

Any proposal that would convert Medicaid to a per-capita grant program at a lower level than health care costs are expected to grow under Medicaid in future years jeopardizes the ability of districts to deliver many of these needed services. Districts must continue to provide required IEP supports and services, but without adequate

Medicaid funding, and inadequate funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), districts will have no choice but to resort to cuts in general education.

The various legislative proposals currently under consideration could ultimately eliminate Medicaid as a dedicated funding source for school districts. On behalf of NYSSBA, I urge you to do whatever you can to prevent that from happening.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy G. Kremer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Timothy G. Kremer
Executive Director

Cc: NYS Congressional Delegation
Deborah Rigsby, NSBA