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Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.
President

March 14, 2005

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1702

Dear Senator McConnell:

I write to urge you to support a bipartisan amendment to the Senate FY 2006 Budget Resolution, offered by Sens. Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). The amendment strikes the bill's instructions requiring the Senate Finance Committee to find \$15 billion in savings over 5 years, primarily through the Medicaid program. The Smith/Bingaman amendment would also work to reform the Medicaid program through the establishment of a bipartisan commission to study and make recommendations to improve the program's service delivery, quality of care and cost-efficiency.

Adequate Medicaid funding is particularly important to teaching hospitals and physicians, who treat a major portion of the Medicaid population. In 2003, for example, two out of three Medicaid patients seeking hospital care received it at a teaching hospital. As such, the economic impact of cuts to Medicaid could force teaching hospitals and physicians to make difficult choices in terms of their commitment to serving all who need healthcare, regardless of their ability to pay. Additionally, cutting Medicaid will affect us all. A loss in federal Medicaid funds will likely increase the number of uninsured patients in our community, placing an even greater burden on already overcrowded emergency rooms.

We recognize and appreciate that you and your colleagues must seek ways to manage federal healthcare spending, in light of a rising budget deficit. However, I urge you to resist proposals that would disproportionately affect programs that are critical to the health and well-being of all Americans. Please vote yes on the Smith/Bingaman amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan J. Cohen".

Jordan J. Cohen