POLICY BEAT

Weekly Digest
May 9th – May 13th, 2011

This Week in Health Policy...

- Medicaid Maintenance of Effort
- Medical Liability Reform
- Voices of Detroit Initiative
- GOP Candidates Debate Health Care

Office of Health Policy and Government Relations
This week, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health approved H.R. 1683, a bill that would impact eligibility for and enrollment in Medicaid nationwide by repealing the Maintenance of Effort provisions that exist under current law. If enacted, tens of millions of seniors, children, pregnant women, and Americans with disabilities could lose their Medicaid coverage, with dire consequences for their families, providers, and the nation’s fragile economy. More details on the potential fallout here.

**Why Medicaid Matters:**

- **Largest provider of long-term care nationwide**
- **Covers services, such as home health care, that Medicare does not**
- **States lose $1.33 in federal revenue for every $1 they cut in Medicaid**
- **Cutting Medicaid increases the number of uninsured**
- **Cutting Medicaid reduces access to care, and increases disparities.**
This week, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce passed H.R. 5, the Help Efficient, Accessible, Low Cost, Timely Health Care (HEALTH) Act, by a vote of 30 to 20. Authored by Rep. Phil Gingrey, M.D., the bill seeks to address the challenge of medical liability reform by: imposing caps on non-economic damages; setting strict standards for awarding punitive damages; setting specific time horizons within which plaintiffs can file suit; and restricting contingency fees for trial lawyers. More details about the bill here.

Image credit: Microsoft Office clip art
The **Voices of Detroit Initiative** transitions low income, underserved patients from expensive emergency room visits to the primary care setting. 55,000 patients are now enrolled in the program, and 55% were transitioned into lower cost primary care over 5 years. NMA member and CEO of Health Centers Detroit Medical Group, **Dr. Herbert Smitherman**, discussed the program’s success in a recent interview. Video available [here](#).

Image credit: KHN
Last week, several Republicans aspiring to be President of the United States debated health care and other matters in Greenville, S.C.

For the latest health policy news and information, visit our page NMA Health Policy Updates.

What You Can Do

• Please call your Governors and Members of Congress RIGHT NOW, and urge them to preserve Medicaid maintenance of effort provisions. Contact info here and here.

• Is Policy Beat helpful? Please send us feedback at healthpolicy@nmanet.org

• New email address? Let us know at healthpolicy@nmanet.org


