



June 15, 2017

Re: The American Health Care Act

The Honorable Dick Durbin
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
The Honorable Robin Kelly
The Honorable Daniel Lipinski
The Honorable Luis Gutierrez
The Honorable Mike Quigley
The Honorable Peter J. Roskam
The Honorable Danny K. Davis
The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
The Honorable Bradley Schneider
The Honorable Bill Foster
The Honorable Mike Bost
The Honorable Rodney Davis
The Honorable Randy Hultgren
The Honorable John Shimkus
The Honorable Adam Kinzinger
The Honorable Cheri Bustos
The Honorable Darin LaHood

Dear Members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation:

Illinois school districts are facing unprecedented uncertainty without an enacted state budget for the 2018 fiscal year. This crisis is compounded by discussions at the federal level regarding possible cuts and changes to Medicaid reimbursement to support Illinois' neediest children. We are specifically concerned that proposed cuts and changes to Medicaid's structure through the American Health Care Act (AHCA) will threaten access to medical and therapeutic supports for vulnerable Illinois children.

Illinois school districts currently receive \$144 million in Medicaid reimbursements to provide medical care and special education services for students. These services include the work of professionals such as speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses, as well as reimbursement for costly supplies and materials. An early investment in these services provides a solid developmental start for many children and serves as a preventative measure against future social service needs. Below are just two examples of how this funding is utilized throughout the state.

- The East St. Louis Area Joint Agreement, which serves students in the East St. Louis School District 189, uses Medicaid funding to purchase needed materials and supplies for service staff, including speech-language pathologists and physical therapists.
- Champaign Unit 4 utilizes Medicaid funding for all audiology services, providing the only Deaf and Hearing-Impaired program in the area; all orientation and mobility services for students who are blind or vision-impaired; a Young Adult Program to teach functional



life, vocational, and community skills for students that will require lifetime support; and finally, instructional supplies and equipment. Champaign also utilizes Medicaid reimbursement for expensive equipment such as changing tables, adapted seating, and other equipment for students with severe disabilities.

Medicaid funding is vital to providing services to Illinois students that assist their developmental and academic success. Many of these supports are specifically intended to meet requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for students with special needs.

We urge you to reach out to your local school districts to learn more about the benefits Medicaid support provides to children in your community. If you have any questions, or if we can provide further information on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact Alison Maley at alison@ilprincipals.org or 217-525-1383.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jason Leahy, Executive Director, Illinois Principals Association

Dr. Brent Clark, Executive Director, Illinois Association of School Administrators

Mr. Roger Eddy, Executive Director, Illinois Association of School Boards

Dr. Michael Jacoby, Executive Director, Illinois Association of School Business Officials

Dr. Lea Anne Frost, President, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education