



Global Leadership for Health Education & Health Promotion

July 26, 2017

Re: Sen. Hassan Amendment on Motion to Commit

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

The Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) is writing to urge you and your colleagues in the Senate to support the Motion to Commit offered by Senator Hassan which would preserve the ability of children in public schools to access critical Medicaid services. This amendment will ensure that nothing in the American Health Care Act would reduce or eliminate the amount, duration, or scope of Medicaid services available in schools under current law.

Schools currently receive roughly \$4 billion in Medicaid reimbursements each year. This amendment preserves the funding stream for school districts, so Medicaid can continue to support the learning and development of children in school. School-based Medicaid programs serve as a lifeline to children who are unable to access critical health care and health services outside of their school. Without this funding children with disabilities and children in poverty will face increased barriers to learning; they will be more likely to miss school, perform poorly in class, drop out before high school graduation, and less likely to be employed.

In a 2017 survey of school districts, district officials reported that two-thirds of Medicaid dollars are used to support the work of health professionals and other specialized instructional support personnel such as school-based health educators who provide comprehensive health and mental health services to students. Districts also use these funds to expand the availability of health services to students in poverty, who are more likely to lack consistent access to health care professionals. Investing in school-based health education, such as opportunities for physical activity and options for healthy eating, provides an environment for students to be healthy and educated, which every child deserves. Additionally, it decreases the risk of children becoming unhealthy adults with costly chronic medical conditions.

We urge you to carefully consider the important benefits that Medicaid provides to our nation's most vulnerable children. Please support this amendment and allow the Senate to find a bipartisan solution to invest in the health and well-being of all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Elaine Auld'.

M. Elaine Auld, MPH, MCHES
SOPHE Chief Executive Officer