

Michaud Applauds Legislature's Action on Medicaid Cuts; Pledges Support in Congress

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WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressman Mike Michaud applauded the Maine Legislature's advocacy on behalf of Medicaid patients who will be hurt by recent regulatory action taken by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Michaud recently became a cosponsor of H.R. 5172, a bill which would delay through March 2009 the implementation of CMS's regulation which would drastically cut Medicaid funding for case management and targeted case management (TCM) services that currently assist vulnerable Medicaid-eligible adults and children.

"The regulation is scheduled to take effect soon and Congress must act," said Michaud. "We must ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are not denied these crucial case management services and that state budgets are not overly burdened. I will work with my colleagues in the House to urge the Energy and Commerce Committee to fast track this bill. The State of Maine and Medicaid beneficiaries can't afford for Congress to drag its heels on this."

Through Section 6052 of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA), Congress clarified the scope of the case management and TCM benefit, excluding from the definition the direct delivery of certain underlying medical, educational, or social services, all the while prominently iterating that many case management services remain allowable, legitimate Medicaid expenses. The recently issued interim final rule goes far beyond the statutory provisions of the DRA and intent of Congress. Mainers disproportionately affected by these cuts include individuals with disabilities and mental illness, low-income seniors, and children in foster care.

"The Maine Legislature is one hundred percent correct - Maine and our Medicaid recipients can't afford this change," said Michaud. "The State will be left holding the tab. This is especially troubling given our current economic downturn and the troubles facing Maine's budget. When the federal government creates new regulations, they need to properly take into account what the outcome on the ground will be. They have clearly not done a sufficient analysis and have greatly overstepped."