

Re: CMS-2287-P

The purpose of this comment is to express concern for the proposed rule changes (CMS-2287-P) that, if adopted, would eliminate schools' reimbursements for certain services provided to Medicaid-eligible students, with the most immediate effect being the elimination of transportation services to students with IEP's.

As the parent of a child with special needs, I would like to comment that elimination of transportation to and from school would create a hardship for not only my own family, but many thousands of other families as well.

In reading a copy of the proposed regulations, it is clear that one prime motivating factor in making this proposal is to address the problem of excessive expenses to the CMS. The discussion of the regulations clearly implicates school districts' "... improper billing ... for administrative costs and transportation services."

It is outrageous that the response to alleged fraudulent reporting/claims by the school districts is to eliminate the service altogether. Numerous alternative solutions exist, the most obvious of which is to install safeguards and auditing procedures that would eliminate the possibility of such fraudulent activity taking place in the future, thereby solving the problem while keeping the services intact.

Elimination of these services amounts to an injustice against disabled students throughout the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Steven Dionne
Fallbrook, CA

Submitter : Ms. Raejean French

Date: 09/23/2007

Organization : N/A

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I'm not certain I need an extensive background on the economics of eliminating reimbursement for this expense. If states cannot take up the slack, and most of them are struggling to provide non-medical transportation to get children to school, as well as to satisfy other Federal requirements, this funding cut will be yet another unfunded Bush administration mandate. (You know, that same unconventionally elected administration prosecuting an illegal, falsely premised war that is costing us billions and making the Bush family and its connections richer. But hey, let's cut out the short buses! Let's screw over the veterans! Let's give empty lip service to Katrina victims! Let's get all the vulnerable ones-after the photo op!) It demands we leave no child behind, but disabled kids will be left back at the curb. Do I need any particular expertise to say it's short-sighted, inhuman, unjust, and reprehensible?

Submitter : Ms. Barbara Callahan
Organization : NA
Category : Individual

Date: 09/23/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

As a person who works with children and has four of my own, I find this appalling. I honestly hope that you will NOT take the funding away from ANY child or adult that is truly in need. If in fact you want to look at ways to fund this, by all means cut the school's Administration salaries if you can not afford to pay for this with Medicaid.

CMS-2287-P-95

Submitter : Trish mcdonald
Organization : Raytown School District
Category : Academic

Date: 09/23/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please do not take away funding for school districts. Many of our needed staff that supply direct services to children who are on medicaid are paid through this funding.

Submitter : Virginia D'Amico
Organization : Virginia D'Amico
Category : Individual

Date: 09/23/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please discontinue this program. The potential for misuse is great and it is not a good use of tax dollars. When you have private consultants paid to find ways for schools to be reimbursed, there seems to be a conflict. Employees are pressured to create events during time accounting weeks that really are not part of the work during the rest of the year.

Submitter : Mrs. Sandra DeLarm
Organization : Smithton R-VI School District
Category : Individual

Date: 09/24/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Many school districts have benefited from this additional money. It has been used to give our students the best free and appropriate education that we can provide. It would be helpful if this additional money could continue.

Submitter : Ms. Janet Kliegl
Organization : Lindsay Unified School District
Category : Academic

Date: 09/24/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

It is very important that Reimbursement under Medicaid for School Administration Expenditures and Costs... be continued for school districts. In our school district if this money was eliminated, we would loose a Licensed Vocational Nurse, counseling services for alcohol and drug abuse for students, and 7 casemanagers as well as a director who is able to coordinate services from 15 different agencies to serve our students. These dollars provide much needed services to our students that otherwise they would not be provided.

Submitter : Mr. Danny Diaz

Date: 09/24/2007

Organization : Lindsay Unified School District Healthy Start

Category : Social Worker

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Through my writings I want to strongly voice my concern about withdrawing the opportunity for school to get medical reimbursements. Lindsay Unified school district resides within the poorest county in CA, as such this money has enable the school to provide service that otherwise would have been impossible. Lindsay is a very small community consisting of agricultural workers that can barely make ends meet. Currently the school is viewed as one of the main sources of assistance because of our resource center. The resource center provides a variety of services that are available through the reimbursement moneys that the MAA allocation provides to us. Because of the current economy and the economical status of our community the withdraw of such money will hinder upon the well being of Lindsay as a whole. Our resource center would be devastated by this huge loss. No longer would we be able to assist families like the service we currently provide. Please I urge you to reconsider, and continue to provide us with opportunity to get reimbursement money under MAA. If you continue to allow reimbursement for other providers, why not the school when they see the biggest number of children on a daily basis and service them?

Sincerely

Danny Diaz
Concerned for the Community

Submitter : Mrs. Linda Brewer

Date: 09/24/2007

Organization : Siloam Springs School District

Category : Congressional

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please reconsider the proposal CMS 2287 and continue to allow schools to receive funds for Medicaid Administrative services within their districts. Our district participated in the ARMC program last year and were able to purchase necessary technology equipment, nursing equipment, and supplies for our students.
Thanks

Submitter : Miss. Nicole Albert
Organization : De Anza Community College
Category : Academic

Date: 09/24/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please do not cancel this program. Our department serves low-income single parents on CalWORKs and we depend on this program for a source of our funding. This program allows us to make sure that our students and their children have health care coverage. With the MAA program we are able to make referrals to Healthy Families, appropriate doctors and dentist offices in the area and make sure their children are taken care of. As we all know, the more that families are covered by health care - the more they can succeed at their endeavors and achieve self-sufficiency.

Thank you for your attention and time.

Sincerely,

Nicole Albert

Program Coordinator - CalWORKs program

De Anza Community College

Submitter :

Date: 09/24/2007

Organization :

Category : Academic

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

The federal government requires school systems to serve students with disabilities without adequately funding programs for such services. The Medicaid Reimbursement Program provides a source of funding to enable school systems to provide FAPE to these students. School districts have enough constraints under which they operate. Teachers and parents set high expectations for students. Students with disabilities are often expensive to educate. These funds are put to good use to provide programming and resources to help students with disabilities progress in the curriculum.

Submitter : Mrs. Guadalupe Garcia

Date: 09/24/2007

Organization : Mrs. Guadalupe Garcia

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I have been personally involved with a non-profit organization for 2.5 years that works to serve children, through schools, who are in need of physical and mental health services. During that time I have seen what a difference it makes when children enter the classroom healthy and ready to learn. Our organization alone, working through just one school district, assisted over 200 children last year with enrollment into the Medi-Cal or Healthy Families program. Schools are a logical place for families to access health services. Families are familiar and comfortable with the people and the school. The unique role played by schools as a health service portal is irreplaceable and vital to keep our communities healthy. I urge you to continue your support for the school-based MAA program.

Submitter : Ms. Ana Perez
Organization : Caring Connection
Category : Social Worker

Date: 09/24/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I have been personally involved with a non-profit organization Caring Connections for 7 years that works to serve children, through the schools, who are in need of physical and mental health services. During that time I have seen what a difference it makes when children enter the classroom healthy and ready to learn. "Our Motto" is "HEALTHY KIDS LEARN BETTER" Our organization alone, working through just one school district, assisted 209 children last year with enrollment into the Medi-Cal or Healthy Families program. Schools are a logical place for families to access health services. Families are familiar and comfortable with the people and the school, and I being the Case Manager I work directly with the families, and I can assure you that it makes a very BIG difference when there is someone they feel comfortable and can communicate with at the school. The unique role played by schools as a health service portal is irreplaceable. I urge you to continue your support for the school-based MAA program.

Submitter : Mr. Randall Jarrard
Organization : School System
Category : Local Government

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Dear Madam or Sir:

I am disappointed to hear that there is a proposed medicaid rule to eliminate reimbursement for administrative activities and transportation. This would be detrimental for most school systems. We rely on this money to supplement our services provided to students with disabilities. For example, we currently use most of our reimbursement money to pay for a nurse to regulate feeding tubes, medications, catheters, for medically fragile students.

Please consider not changing the current Medicaid rule. Thanks, Randall

Submitter :

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization :

Category : State Government

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I do not agree with the proposed rule. Medicaid funds are vital for the administrative and transportation of special education students. Special Education needs all the funding possible for our students.

Submitter : Ms. Katelyn Heberling
Organization : Santa Clara County Office of Education
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

As the personal assistant to a speech pathologist, I would like to voice my concern about the push to eliminate MAA. In the 2 years I have worked with the speech pathologist, I have seen at least 30 students helped by supplies purchased with MAA money. We have been able to buy tools and games we otherwise would have forfeited, and those have helped our students succeed in school and in life. When working with students in the post-senior program (from the ages of 18 to 22), we have purchased numerous social games and situation cards to assist in workplace readiness, all of which have been used with success. These students also work in the community, doing jobs that involve the very social skills we have assisted in perfecting - which means the community as a whole benefits when these students learn using resources MAA money provided. MAA money is not money wasted on toys and games for the disabled, it is an investment toward the future, a way for students to do their best, and therefore give their best to society.

Submitter : Lawrence Shweky

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Lawrence Shweky

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Eliminating these funds will only tax an already overburdened school system. Please do not take this money away!!!

Submitter : Mrs. Tammy Hanson
Organization : Mrs. Tammy Hanson
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I must express my outrage that the federal government is considering stopping payments for the transportation & education of children with special needs. The amount of help that is paid for by the federal, state, and local governments doesn't even come close to covering the expenses a family faces for a child with special needs. These families are already sacrificing their retirement, college funds for their other children, any sort of social life, etc. The list is too long to type here. These families are some of our societies most fragile and vulnerable, and should be offered more support rather than less.

What does this say about the current lawmakers in office? It says that I will never vote for any of them, and will actively campaign against them. I will campaign for the support of families who are already in crisis.

On top of the loss of funds, community members will blame these families for the loss of other school services that will surely happen as districts try to balance budgets without these funds. One more dump on these families who need extra support, now they face antagonism from their community, as if it's their fault.

What happens to the heart of a politician that allows him or her to consider this type of attack?

Submitter : Mrs. Valerie Sheehan
Organization : Mrs. Valerie Sheehan
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please ensure that money for student transportation and other essential services remain in the federal budget. Eliminating this program will end up costing more in the long run.

Submitter : Mr. Frank Way

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : None

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

This bill makes me wonder just how mean and Scrooge like the authors are. It is most certainly not indicative of the supposed "Compassionate Conservatism" this president bragged about when he first ran for this office. A pox on all of your houses.
Frank Way

Submitter : Ms. Pam Butler

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Ms. Pam Butler

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

If funds are cut to school districts for special needs such as speech therapy, physical therapy, there would be many children that are left behind. I am a single parent of 2 children and have used the speech therapy from the school district for both children. If this were not available to my children, they each would have there individual speech problems. I have had excellent speech service for my children in the Davis School District. I feel very strongly about keeping these services for the children as many families would not be able to afford such services. When the children get the help that is needed by a professional they will feel more comfortable in a social setting such as school. Please keep these services available in the school districts and give the children a chance to succeed. Thank You

Submitter : Diane Moore
Organization : Diane Moore
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

How can you talk about leaving no child behind (and you stole that phrase in the first place) and then refuse disabled children transportation to school? Especially when some of their health care is at the school? The states will still have to provide it, so the money comes out of all the children's education -- but you won't leave anybody behind, right? No, you'll just take away half their education to make time for teaching to tests, and refuse them medical care (CHIP) if their parents can't afford it.

Submitter : Ms. Sharzad Otmishi

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Santa Clara County Office of Education

Category : Nurse

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please advocate for the MAA program as it has help our students tremendously. Thank you.

Submitter : Ms. Lorraine Custodio
Organization : Ms. Lorraine Custodio
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

It is important to continue to fund CMD- 2287-9 Medicaid Program to help support and educate our young people with special needs. My daughter has benefited from special education services and supports since kindergarten when she was diagnosed with global developmental delays. We could not/can not pay for this important services on our own. Her speech therapy, occupation therapy and socialization services have made it possible for her to now participate in a regular classroom with a regular teacher. She is now in the 6th grade and her success is due in large part to the support and services she received in her early years in the public school. She is able to learn and compete in the general classroom and will someday be a self-supporting adult contributing to society, thanks to the early support she received.

Please do not cut this necessary funding to our schools.

Submitter : David Driesbach
Organization : Santa Clara County Office of Education
Category : Other Health Care Professional

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I am a School Psychologist working with very severely handicapped children in the schools. Special Education has never been fully funded by the Federal Government, which places more burden on the States and forces schools to take money from the general education fund. MAA allows proper reimbursement to the schools for work done by health-care professionals. Please vote to continue this important program.

Submitter : Mrs. Jean Petrillo

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Mrs. Jean Petrillo

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I urge you to continue reimbursement under Medicaid for School Administration Expenditures and Costs related to transportation of children between home and school. I have worked with a nonprofit children's dental clinic for over two years and time and again transportation has been a barrier regarding access to care. Case managers are key in bridging the gap between school, home and good general health. Often the parents are not able to provide transportation and having the case manager provide it is vital. Thank you for your consideration and again I urge to NOT eliminate this service.

Submitter : Mrs. Sandy Thibodeaux
Organization : Mrs. Sandy Thibodeaux
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I have been involved with a non-profit organization for 10+ years taht works to serve children, who need medical and other health services. During these years I have seen what a BIG difference it makes when children are healthy and ready to learn in the classroom. The school district last year assisted 220+ children with enrollment into the FMedi-Cal or Healthy Families program. I urge you to coninue your suppor for the school-based MAA program.

Submitter : Mrs. Peggy Hamel

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Youth Foundation and BUSD

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

This in response to the proposed elimination of MAA programs in the schools. I have been personally involved with a non-profit organization for 15 years that works to serve children, I volunteer with PTA, Youth Foundation, Caring Connection and have worked for the school when there was a EMHI grant. During that time I have seen what a difference it makes when children enter the classroom healthy and ready to learn. Our organization alone, working through just one school district, assisted 209 children last year with enrollment into the Medi-Cal or Healthy Families program. Schools are a logical place for families to access health services. Families are familiar and comfortable with the people and the school. The unique role played by schools as a health service portal is irreplaceable. I urge you to continue your support for the school-based MAA program. Sincerely, Peggy Hamel

Submitter : Bonnie Mintun

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Bonnie Mintun

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

NOT a good idea. We will go way backwards to a time when children with medical disabilities were housed in institutions, 'so they can get the care they need'. We know how that turned out. It's taken us years to release them and to accept diversity in the children amongst us. Children with disabilities were the last to be included, and they are not going away. They are being educated right where they belong. Don't make it hard for them to get to school, and to get the support they need to succeed.

Submitter : Ms. Mercedes Herrera

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : La Familia

Category : Other Association

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please do not destroy the lives of children and their families by taking away the funding of services rendered to them because of the medicaid reimbursement. We want to continue the same level of services to the children and their families to live productive and healthily lives. Please do not eliminate-- act from the heart and think what's the right thing to do on behalf of those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Submitter : Mrs. Christina Adamson

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Mrs. Christina Adamson

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Elimination of reimbursement of transportation costs to school districts for special needs children is a huge mistake. Districts are already struggling to make ends meet. Because districts are required by law to provide a free education to all children (including those with special needs), this funding would need to be taken from another area, which will surely affect all students. The Bush Administration cannot expect schools to continue to provide all it needs to the students when they pull such a vital portion of funding. You can not require schools to provide transportation, but not fund it. Schools can not be expected to provide quality education to our children when the funding continually decreases.

My son is in a power chair full time and even though we currently do not use the transportation that is provided by our school district, I know he will always be able to attend any school in our district because of it. Families with special needs children already have their plates full, especially first thing in the morning. For those families that rely on district provided transportation, the lack of it could cause extreme hardship. These families rely on the transportation to safely get their children to school so they can get to work on time and support their families.

Submitter : Mrs. Estella Delgado

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Caring Connections

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I have been personally involved with a non-profit organization for 10 years that works to serve children, through the school, who are in need of physical and mental health services. During that time I have seen what a difference it makes when children enter the classroom healthy and ready to learn. Our organization alone, working through just one school district, assisted 209 children last year with enrollment into the Medi-Cal or Healthy Families program. Schools are logical place for families to access health services. Families are familiar and comfortable with the people and the school. The unique role played by schools as a health service portal is irreplaceable. I urge you to continue your support for the school-based MAA program.

Submitter : Mrs. Vivian Long

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : Mrs. Vivian Long

Category : Congressional

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I cannot believe what I read in today's Sacramento BEE. "Children left behind." Reference CMS-2287-P.

How are the communities and schools supposed to offer service to handicapped children when their federal funding is cut off, but the federal law still demands that they provide transportation and support services?

I wish our lawmakers could spend a day strapped in a wheelchair, their glasses smeared with grease so their vision is blurred, rocks in their mouths so they can't talk clearly, their legs hobbled so they can't walk without a lot of help.

How are children with medical problems supposed to learn if they're not able to get their medications while at school?

How are handicapped children supposed to get to school when their parents are working two jobs, don't have cars, and the transportation funding is cut off?

How does this administration spend trillions on an illegal war, and short-change, grossly short-change, the neediest of our population?

HOW?

Submitter : Dr. Diane D'Agostino
Organization : Colton Joint Unified School District
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Federal law requires school districts to provide medical services, including transportation, so that disabled children may attend school and access their education. Under the proposed rule, we would continue to be required to provide transportation services, but without reimbursement, causing my school district to have to make up the costs in a manner that would impact all children in the district. The narrow view of the proponents of the proposed rule is that disabled children are "transported from home to school primarily to receive an education, not to receive direct medical services". However, for disabled children, medical support services and education are often intertwined.

The administrative activities that are currently reimbursed insure that students from low income families have access to health care services so that they can attend school ready to learn. We have a high proportion of medicaid eligible students in our district that may not receive needed medical care for dental problems, vision problems, asthma (also a high prevalence in our district), and diabetes, for example, due to staff not being funded to make a concerted effort to support parents in obtaining health services. Our district may lose over \$500,000 in funds that can be used to support proper health, mental health, and preventative services for students. Our district staff knows full well the impact poor health has on students, and in many cases, students are not accessing health care, through no fault of their own. Continued reimbursement for medical administrative activities would allow staff in our district to spend the time to inform parents about health insurance, medical providers, and good health care for their children. This has been one of the best programs to get health care for low income students; if not for this, parents often wait until a health problem becomes a medical crisis, then head to their local hospital emergency room, which only drives up the taxpayer costs for everyone.

My school district uses medicaid funds to provide health assistants at every school, CPR and first aid training to staff, health and first aid supplies for schools, health education materials for students and parents, insurance information to families, information about free health care (including medications and eyeglasses) to parents, transportation for wheelchair-bound students to medical therapy, and many other things with direct benefit to students. The funds are not spent frivolously. All this care only allows students to come to school rested, healthy, and ready to learn. Cutting off the funds that allow staff in my school district to monitor the health needs of students will only result in increased student absenteeism due to unmanaged illnesses, as well as poor student academic performance due to lingering unmanaged health concerns.

Please consider the impact this proposed rule will have on the children in our public schools, especially in school districts such as mine, with a high poverty rate and increasing pediatric health problems such as asthma, diabetes, and dental decay. It's not fair to the kids, and it's no way to insure that the education we are attempting to provide them will be of benefit. Sick kids can't learn, period. And until the federal government assigns someone else the responsibility for assisting families in obtaining health care for children, then it will continue to fall on the shoulders of the school communities to make sure it happens. Please don't take chances with our nation's most valuable resource: the children.

Submitter : Mrs. Anna Petersen
Organization : Santa Clara County Office of Education
Category : Speech-Language Therapist

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I am writing to urge you to keep the Medicaid reimbursement program alive. I am a speech-language pathologist and have directly seen the benefits of this program. Before the program was instated, I was unable to order the material and adaptive equipment my students needed. Many of my students are physically impaired and require special equipment to access the world around them (such as special mouse controls for the computer and communication devices). The funds have enabled me to attend workshops to learn skills so that I may be able to work with my student more effectively.

Submitter : Mrs. Sally Dickinson
Organization : Turlock Unified School District
Category : Individual

Date: 09/25/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Please do not take away this vital school funding...our students matter...please have some compassion.

Submitter : Mrs. Margaret McKinley

Date: 09/25/2007

Organization : N/A

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I am totally opposed to this proposed regulation to end Medicaid reimbursements to schools for support services, such as transportation to and from school, but still require the schools to provide those health-related services for disabled children. The United States has guaranteed children with disabilities equal access to education since 1975. Now, however, this mean spirited Bush administration has decided to dump that premise because it is too expensive. This would then shift the expense to the state which in California is \$103 million. As a taxpayer, I am already paying plenty for Bush's war and whether the United States government pays for disabled transportation to school or whether the state of California pays for that transportation, I will still pay. I am completely convinced that George W. Bush does not care about the American citizen. He is making every attempt to balance his budget on the backs of American children. He has already stated that he will veto the SCHIP bill which would continue to provide coverage for children from families too poor to afford private insurance but not eligible for Medicaid. He should be ashamed!

Submitter : Mrs. Patricia Weber

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : none

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Article in the Sacramento Bee (CA) states CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND, (Feds would dump costs on local districts) If I read between the lines, I would guess that the California Education Dept. was not holding up their half of the bargain. They say that the federal government is supposed to pay for transportation from home to school and back AND THE STATE AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WOULD PAY FOR MEDICAL SERVICES. I THINK THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS PROBABLY PAYING FOR ALL OF IT, because of the comment in the paper that states Medical support and education are intertwined. Of course it's not the Education Departments fault because they could not follow the rules, it's the Federal Government. And of course at the end of the article, their comment is (If this federal money goes away, you can be sure that local DISTRICTS will need to make up the costs in a way that AFFECTS All children). California does not care about their children. Almost 90% of their budget goes to administration and 10-12% goes to the children. Does that sound like someone who cares. SO I AGREE, IF THEY CANNOT PLAY BY THE RULES THEN THEY SHOULD NOT ASK TO BE REIMBURSED BY THE GOVERNMENT. Something needs to be done to clean up the broken Education department.
Patricia Weber

Submitter : Ms. Cathy Boshamer

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : NC Council of Administrators of Special Education

Category : Other Association

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

See attachment.

CMS-2287-P-130-Attach-1.DOC

NC CASE Draft Comments on Proposed Rule 2287-P September 21, 2007

The North Carolina chapter of the Council of Administrators of Special Education is absolutely opposed to the proposed cuts in Medicaid reimbursement under Rule 2287-P. Medicaid reimbursement for legitimate and desperately needed school-based services is essential to the provision of services to eligible children with disabilities in North Carolina. Long experience in many communities has shown that schools are the single location where students in need of such services as well their families can be reached most efficiently. Our organization understands that CMS must address inappropriate claiming on the part of some school districts across the country. That is the purpose of the audit process. Instead of eliminating federal financial participation for costs of effective activities that serve Medicaid-eligible students in schools, CMS should develop reasonable guidance and criteria for any limits and may apply to the allowable use of such funds. In fact, we would strongly support the required direction of those funds toward the services that generated such reimbursements and attendant reasonable support costs.

The approach CMS has taken is akin to going after a gnat with a sledgehammer. If concerns or issues have been identified then CMS now has information to establish regulations to ensure proper claiming. This will then better guide schools in identifying eligible children, promoting efficient access to Medicaid services and providing needed care.

Congress and the Federal government have for many years encouraged Medicaid to share in schools' costs for meeting the medical needs of students with disabilities. Bills and amendments before the last and current Congress¹ indicate this support. Given the growing proportion of uninsured children who lack access to basic health care and the impact this has on their ability to learn it is vital that Medicaid share in schools' costs to see that children's essential health needs are met. Dozens of schools and systems in North Carolina are working with Public Health Departments and other health care providers to coordinate school health programs specifically designed to address unmet health needs of school children. It is clear that good health is essential to academic achievement for children.² Every school in North Carolina deals with students who come to school each day with untreated medical, dental and mental health conditions. We are facing rapidly rising numbers of school-age children affected by obesity, substance issues, pregnancy and suicide. School systems simply cannot do this alone.

All public agencies that conduct Medicaid outreach through information sharing and care coordination are eligible for Federal financial participation in the costs of such activities. Why eliminate the only entity that touches all children, public schools? There are over

¹ Protecting Children's Health in Schools Act of 2006 (SB3705, HR5834) and 2007 (SB578, HR 1017).

² *Health Is Academic, A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs*, edited by Marx, Wooley and Northrop, Teachers College Press, 1998

15,000 school systems in this country that educate more than fifty-three million students.

³ There is no other agency that has so much access to touch and address the needs of disadvantaged youth and their families. Eliminating schools from this process will increase the burden on families; exacerbate health issues, and lower educational achievement.

In our view this proposed rule is in conflict with the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988. It specifically allows Medicaid to reimburse school districts for state plan covered services that schools provide pursuant to the IEPs of Medicaid-eligible children. This proposed rule also runs counter to CMS official statements in the 2003 Medicaid School-based Administrative Claiming Guide, "the school setting provides a unique opportunity to enroll... and to assist" Medicaid-eligible children "access the benefits available to them." Likewise in the Introduction to the Guide, CMS acknowledges, "Contemporary schools are engaged in a variety of activities" to carry out their mission to "help ensure that students come to school healthy...ready to learn [and ready to] benefit from instructional services."

Multiple school districts in North Carolina and across the country have taken this to heart and work very hard to assist families to access Medicaid and SCHIP services. We all have more than enough to do but we collectively do this because we know that healthy children learn more easily than children with unmet health needs. We believe that effective interagency efforts are fundamental to coordinating care and early identification of child health needs.

Now is not the time to further limit schools' resources. Without the ability to participate in the Medicaid reimbursement system we will be less able to ensure that all children in North Carolina receive the education they need to become productive citizens. Most if not all North Carolina school districts have conducted school-based administrative claiming appropriately. If there have been errors we are ready and willing to address them. As educators we know that access to health care is fundamental to academic success for students.

Every school district in North Carolina is deeply committed to helping students achieve their potential. We strongly urge CMS to continue school-based Medicaid administrative activities and state plan-covered services as an effective and efficient means of addressing children's health needs and education.

³ Council of Chief State School Officers, report on Outreach and Enrollment for SCHIP and Medicaid

Submitter : Mrs. Patricia Stalder
Organization : Mrs. Patricia Stalder
Category : Individual

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I urge you to withdraw the rule that would end Medicaid reimbursements to schools for support services, such as transportation to and from school. Education and support services are intertwined and inseparable. Sadly, as a mother, grandmother and former teacher, I can only characterize this proposed rule as mean-spirited.

Submitter : Mr. Barry Sommer
Organization : Barry Sommer, LEP, MFT
Category : Academic

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I am a Licensed Educational Psychologist and Marriage and Family Therapist in central California. In almost three decades of private practice, consultation and service to schools and non-profits serving children and adolescents, I've seen so much good accomplished because of the fiscal support of MAA. For example, at Lindsay Unified School District, through its Healthy Start Program, direct therapeutic services, case management and prevention programming reach so many students and their family. Without the continued support of MAA, these services will be compromised or discontinued, creating significant overload on an already inadequate public mental health and substance abuse treatment system. In this rural community, children and their families would remain isolated from adequate care.

Please continue the vital services that the MAA program provides for public Schools.

Submitter : Mrs. brecter morton

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : Social Work PRN/Atlanta Public Schools

Category : Social Worker

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Our children have experienced enough loss of services. If they have the benefits there is a reason...to further cut transportation to a service undermines the basic element of supporting our special needs children and their family.

Submitter : Terry Hellenkamp
Organization : Terry Hellenkamp
Category : Individual

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Re: CMS-2287-P

I would like to voice my alarm at hearing about the proposed rule changes which would effectively eliminate transportation for disabled children.

As the parent of a child with special needs, elimination of transportation to and from school would create a hardship for not only my own family, but many thousands of other families as well.

Apparently, the proposed change is to help eliminate "fraud" by school districts making claims for reimbursement.

How does it make any sense to penalize a disabled child for acts of fraud by the child's school administrators?? I have a better idea. Why not simply put all the disabled children in jail, and that way the schools will have NO responsibility for providing any services at all!! It would make it very difficult for a school administrator to defraud anybody if the school had no disabled children to care for.

It is unconscionable that the response to alleged fraudulent reporting/claims by the school districts is to eliminate the service altogether. Numerous alternative solutions exist, the most obvious of which is to install safeguards and auditing procedures that would eliminate the possibility of such fraudulent activity taking place in the future, thereby solving the problem while keeping the services intact. Perhaps the dishonest administrators could be punished somehow, *instead* of the children!

Sincerely,

Terry J. Hellenkamp

Submitter : Mrs. Deborah Romo
Organization : Colton Joint Unified School District
Category : Health Care Professional or Association

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I think anyone trying to cut cost for developmentally disabled children should come spend a day at our SDC Class and see the wonderful work our teachers provide and the beautiful smiles on the childrens faces when they have learned something new or conquered a new task. I dont know how you feel but it makes my heart sore just to her them speak new words like Hello or Good bye while smiling. Please take another look at the effects it would have on these deserving children. I fortunately have to very healthy childrena and have never needed these services but what a wonderful contry we live in that takes care of our own the best way we can.

Sincerely,

Deborah Romo /School Health Assistant.

Submitter : Kimberly Bethel

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : Private

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

If the Gov had its way, children would be left out of everything. What is the President giving up?

Submitter :

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : Healthy Start

Category : Social Worker

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I am voicing strong opposition to the rules proposed to eliminate the federal reimbursement under the Medicaid program for school-based administrative and special education transportation costs. We are a district in rural Tulare County with 3000 students who rely on the services provided through this funding. These services are provided through a school based family resource center - Healthy Start. Services include mental health counseling, dental assessments for migrant children, immunizations, support for victims of domestic violence, programs to promote father involvement, case management for Homeless students, case management for families with children with disabilities as well as case management for at risk families in general. It is impossible to overemphasize how important these services are to our families. I also want to emphasize that these services are necessary to the provision of services required under the state plan, and that a rule change eliminating reimbursement only when the affected services are provided through education agencies reflects a differential, and more restrictive treatment of schools in comparison to other settings where the same Medicaid-related activities are provided and for which funding would continue. These funds support services and relationships that are crucial to the well-being of our students and families. Please do not eliminate the opportunity for our Family Resource Center to literally exist. Thank you for your consideration.

Atto Arguelles-Homeless Liaison; Lindsay Unified School District

Submitter : James Schultz
Organization : Riverside Middle School
Category : Individual

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

To Whom It May Concern: As schools is you eliminate Transportation reimbursement the school district has to pick it up. All classes at our middle school are between 28-31 because in Wisconsin we have been QEO'd to death. We have no funds. More positions will go because we still have to pay for the transportation. You are doing a good job of destroying Americas schools.

Submitter : Mrs. Sandra Loftin
Organization : Lindsay Healthy Start
Category : Individual

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the recently proposed regulatory action by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that drastically cuts Medicaid funding by reducing school-based and rehabilitative services for children with disabilities. We are a small school district in rural California with just over 3000 students who rely heavily on the services provided through this funding. These services are provided through a school based family resource center - Healthy Start. Such services include mental health counseling, dental assessments for migrant children, immunizations, support for victims of domestic violence, programs to promote father involvement, case management for families with children with disabilities as well as case management for at risk families in general. It is impossible to overemphasize how important these services are to our families. I also want to emphasize that these services are necessary to the provision of services required under the state plan, and that a rule change eliminating reimbursement only when the affected services are provided through education agencies reflects a differential, and more restrictive treatment of schools in comparison to other settings where the same Medicaid-related activities are provided and for which funding would continue. Please do not eliminate the opportunity for our Family Resource Center to literally exist. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Submitter : Ken and Kathy Myers

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : Ken and Kathy Myers

Category : Individual

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Both of us have taught in California public schools. Kathy has just retired after teaching for 36 years in elementary school. Schools are working hard to raise student test scores. The federal government should not take funds away from public schools. We read in the Sacramento Bee that the Bush administration is proposing regulations that would end Medicaid reimbursements to schools for support services for disabled students. We protest this action as strongly as we can! Please don't let it happen.

Submitter : Amelia Owen-Casillas

Date: 09/26/2007

Organization : Santa Clara County Office of Education

Category : Nurse

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

MAA reimbursement has helped to provide us with funding for needed equipment for serving our students. Please do not cut this funding source.

Submitter : Mrs. Karen Alexander
Organization : Mrs. Karen Alexander
Category : Individual

Date: 09/26/2007

Issue Areas/Comments

GENERAL

GENERAL

Student safety is always the primary focus in school transportation. School-age children transported in school buses are safer than children transported in motor vehicles of any other type. California does not mandate transportation, so often school districts can not afford providing the service. I believe that all children should be afforded a free public education and all children be afforded a safe mode of transportation within reason. However, I believe that parents have a responsibility to provide additional transportation needs and medical care as do parents with children without disabilities.