



September 25, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus:

On behalf of the 1,700 leading not-for-profit hospitals and health systems allied in Premier, we applaud your efforts to advance the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Ensuring adequate funding for the reauthorization of SCHIP to provide essential healthcare coverage to eligible children should be a top priority for the federal government and Premier supports your efforts to move forward.

H.R. 976 would enable states to continue providing health coverage to the 6.6 million children currently enrolled in SCHIP, as well as provide outreach and education to help raise awareness of the program to the millions of families that are currently eligible but not yet enrolled. Premier supports provisions contained in the bill that allow states the option to cover low-income pregnant women, and we are grateful for your work to improve dental and mental health coverage.

As you may know, Premier is a leader in initiatives to improve the quality of hospital care, including the CMS/Premier Hospital Quality Incentive Demonstration project. Therefore, we are pleased that H.R. 976 underscores the importance of quality by requiring development of child healthcare quality measures for children enrolled in Medicaid or SCHIP and providing grants for child health studies.

Premier appreciates the opportunity to share our support for many of the provisions in H.R. 976 and looks forward to working with you to ensure the reauthorization of SCHIP this year.

Sincerely,

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