

ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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Honorable Pat Quinn
Governor, State of Illinois
Room 207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

Our Caucus recently held a discussion on the long-term budget situation facing the State of Illinois, including a discussion of several of the new mandates that may be placed upon our state by the federal government. Many of us are increasingly concerned about the potential new pressures that will be placed on our Medicaid system by the proposed new national health care legislation currently under discussion in Congress.

We recognize that the text of the federal "health care reform" bill has not yet been finalized. However, the lead sponsors of this legislation, and the White House, have both publicly and privately stated that it is their intent and strong inclination to wrap up this measure within the next few weeks or days. In addition, competent analysts have drawn attention to the current 60-vote status of this bill in the federal Senate, and have predicted that the eventual bill is likely to look substantially similar to the bill as passed by the Senate. According to these observers, either the bill will become a law that will look much like the current federal Senate bill, or there will be no law at all.

These reports increase the concerns of many of my colleagues. The Senate bill contains many provisions that impose new burdens upon existing state Medicaid programs, especially Medicaid programs that are organized under the principles used in Illinois. As you probably know, one of the 60 Senate 'yes' votes for this bill, Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Nebraska), did so only on condition that the bill be amended to contain language intended to indemnify Nebraska's state government from the additional Medicaid expenses imposed by the federal government under this bill.

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Similar expenses, including but not limited to Medicaid expenses tied to different federal poverty eligibility levels, will be imposed by the proposed bill upon Illinois. Reports to our caucus indicate that if the Senate "health care reform" language is enacted, this increase could impose increased Medicaid costs of up to \$1.0 billion per year upon Illinois and its taxpayers. As noted above, many observers believe that there is a substantial possibility that current Senate "health care reform" language will closely track language that will soon be presented to both chambers of Congress.

Because of these reports, we need to hear from you. Are you and your staff tracking the fiscal impact upon Illinois of the various federal health care proposals now being discussed? Are you and your staff tracking, in particular, the fiscal impact upon Illinois of the bill that was passed by the Senate on December 24, 2009? How great is this fiscal impact, and what method or methods do you propose to help our state and its taxpayers meet the increased burdens to be imposed upon our Medicaid system by this proposal?

This letter requests that you provide a response to the members of the General Assembly prior to January 31, 2010. It is also our request that you establish a working group with members from each caucus that will receive bimonthly updates on the status of the federal health care proposal and its potential implementation.

We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible on these urgent questions of future state fiscal and public policy.

Sincerely,



Tom Cross
House Republican Leader
State Representative, 84th District

TC:mlb

c: House Republican Members