

March 30, 2006 – **UPDATE** – **APRIL 7, 2006** – **States added: MD and NM** – **Total 29 States**

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
711 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510-3802

RE: Qualified State High Risk Pool Grant Programs

Dear Chairman Specter:

The undersigned organizations respectfully request full funding for the qualified state high risk pool grant programs. These grant programs were originally established through the Trade Adjustment and Assistance Act (TAA) of 2002. They were recently enhanced and extended through the State High Risk Pool Funding Extension Act (H.R. 4519) that President Bush signed into law on February 10, 2006. **Public Law 109-172 authorized to be appropriated \$75,000,000 for each fiscal year from 2007 through 2010.**

High risk pools have been in existence for over 25 years and have helped to stabilize the cost of health insurance in the individual market in the 33 states that have adopted them. They play a critical role in providing health insurance coverage to those who are sick and uninsured, as well as individuals leaving group coverage with serious medical conditions. The federal seed grants programs have helped states financially to get a pool up and running. The operational grant program has helped states with qualified high risk pools offset a portion of the costs of the pools and reduce premiums charged to participants in some states. These programs provide an important safety net for those who are sick.

We urge you to include full funding for the state high risk pool grant programs as you begin drafting the FY07 Labor, Health and Human Services Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations legislation. Full funding for these programs will ensure that states are getting the help they need for the sickest Americans.

Sincerely,

Alabama Health Insurance Plan
Wynnette Smith, Program Director

Alaska Comprehensive Health Insurance Association
Cecil Bykerk, Executive Director

Arkansas Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool
Nicholas Thompson, General Counsel

California Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board
Lesley Cummings, Executive Director

CoverColorado
Barbara Brett, Executive Director

Health Reinsurance Association of Connecticut
Karl Ideman, Administrator

Florida Comprehensive Health Association
Michelle Robleto, Executive Director

Indiana Comprehensive Health Insurance Association
Douglas Stratton, Executive Director

Illinois Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan
Tim Sullivan

Iowa Comprehensive Health Association
Cecil Bykerk, Executive Director

Kansas Health Insurance Association
Ed Fonner, Chairman

Louisiana Health Plan
Leah Barron, Executive Director

Maryland Health Insurance Plan
Richard Popper, Executive Director

Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association
Lynn Gruber, President

Mississippi Comprehensive Health Insurance Risk Pool Association
L. M. Craft, Executive Director

Missouri Health Insurance Pool
Gregory Koppe, Board President

Montana Comprehensive Health Association
Cecil Bykerk, Executive Director

Nebraska Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool
Red Thibault, Chairman of the Board

New Hampshire Health Plan
Fred L. Potter, Executive Director (CML Administrators, LLC)

New Mexico Medical Insurance Pool
Patty Jennings, Executive Director

Comprehensive Health Association of North Dakota
Kathy Robley

Oklahoma Health Insurance High Risk Pool
Steve Kinion, Chairman

Oregon Medical Insurance Pool
Howard "Rocky" King, Administrator

South Dakota Risk Pool
Randy Moses

Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool
Steve Browning, Executive Director

Utah Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool (HIPUtah)
Tomi Jean Ossana, Executive Director

Washington State Health Insurance Pool (WSHIP)
Kären Larson, Executive Director

AccessWV
Alfreda Dempkowski, Executive Director

Wisconsin Health Insurance Risk Sharing Plan Authority
Dennis Conta, Chairman , Board of Directors

cc:Sen. Thad Cochran, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
Sen. Robert C. Byrd, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee
Sen. Enzi, Chairman, Senate Health Education Labor & Pensions Committee
Sen. Kennedy, Ranking Member, Senate Health Education Labor & Pensions Committee