

SAMPLE

Opinion Editorial

Disabled Student Services, Transportation on Federal Chopping Block

The knife has been sharpened and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid are prepared to cut into vital Medicaid reimbursement funds that pay for the health services and transportation of (INSERT NUMBER) disabled students in (INSERT DISTRICT NAME). The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has eliminated funding for the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 in the proposed 2008 Federal Budget. As a result of this cut, CMS has moved forward with proposing regulations that would strip funding from the act, resulting in a loss of more than \$100 million to California for Medicaid reimbursement services for students with disabilities.

Under the Act, school districts are allowed to receive reimbursement from Medicaid for health services delivered to Medicaid-eligible children with disabilities who may need diagnostic, preventive and rehabilitative services; speech, physical and occupational therapies; and transportation for such services. In addition, school districts may claim reimbursement for the administrative costs of providing school-based Medicaid services such as outreach for enrollment purposes, and coordination and monitoring of medical care.

The proposed funding elimination is a direct assault against the students who need assistance the most. The cuts would directly impact the financial stability of more than 500 school districts throughout California. School districts, like the (INSERT DISTRICT NAME) would need to cover the cost of the federal tab, and that could result in the delay or elimination of services to disabled students.

The proposed cut would be a step backward to ensuring our students with special needs are provided the resources necessary to succeed in their education. (INSERT DISTRICT NAME) will continue to work with Congress and other stakeholders to issue written comments to CMS. The public can comment on the proposed rule, CMS-2287-P, at [www.cms.hhs.gov/eRulemaking until Nov. 6](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/eRulemaking%20until%20Nov.6). Our students with disabilities should not be on the federal government's chopping block.