



July 25, 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus  
The Honorable Charles Grassley  
The Honorable Jay Rockefeller  
The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Baucus and Senators Grassley, Rockefeller & Hatch:

On behalf of the 210,000 members and 1,200 affiliates of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), I am writing to offer strong support for the bipartisan State Childrens' Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) reauthorization legislation recently reported by the Finance Committee. As the nation's largest organization representing children and adults with mental illness and their families, NAMI is pleased to support the critically needed resources in this legislation to help states reach as many eligible uninsured children as possible.

NAMI is especially grateful for provisions in your legislation that will add as much as \$35 billion in new funding above the current \$25 billion base over the next five years in order to preserve coverage for as many as 6.6 million children (including those who would have lost coverage without this new investment). These new resources will also help states reach an estimated 3.3 million eligible uninsured low-income children. Your legislation also makes important investments for outreach and enrollment to help states reach eligible children and streamline eligibility for Medicaid enrollment.

NAMI is especially grateful to you and your colleagues on the Finance Committee for approving the Kerry-Smith Amendment that will ensure that in states that use a private group health plan option for SCHIP, coverage for mental illness will be included on an equitable, non-discriminatory basis. For the sake of America's children and youth who experience mental illnesses, it is critical that Congress put in place a standard that bars discriminatory limits on inpatient days, outpatient visits and cost sharing for mental health benefits. NAMI strongly supports the Kerry-Smith Amendment and looks forward to working with you to ensure that it stays in this SCHIP reauthorization as the legislation moves forward toward enactment.

**NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS**  
**2107 Wilson Blvd., #300 \* Arlington, VA 22201 \* 703-524-7600 \* [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)**

NAMI congratulates you on this important step forward for uninsured children across our nation, especially children and adolescents living with mental illness. NAMI looks forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that this legislation remains strong as it moves forward to the full Senate. Thank you for your leadership on this important national health care priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Fitzpatrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, M.S.W.  
Executive Director