

SEPTEMBER 8, 2005

SCHAKOWSKY: PEOPLE WILL DIE IF WE CUT \$10 BILLION FROM MEDICAID

MEDICAID EXPANSION NEEDED DUE TO HURRICANE KATRINA, INCREASES IN POVERTY AND UNINSURED RATES

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky today spoke out against cuts to Medicaid in a hearing before the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Representative Schakowsky said that due to the Hurricane, and the number of middle class Americans who have slipped below the poverty line and lost their health insurance, Medicaid should be strengthened and expanded, rather than cut by \$10 billion.

Representative Schakowsky's statement is below:

Let me take issue with what you said Mr. Chairman that Hurricane Katrina is very different from the Medicaid issue. That was an act of nature Hurricane Katrina. But human decisions, decisions by this Administration, to . . . defund the building up of levees, the contempt for the public sector that I think has been demonstrated leading up to this hurricane disaster made it into a man-made disaster.

Americans watched with shock and shame, not shock and awe, at the complete failure, the dysfunction of this government, in responding to this situation. . . . The President said no one could anticipate a breach in the levees. Well, that wasn't true because it was predictable and predicted just as a cut in Medicaid of 10 billion dollars - let's be clear, and let's get the word to the President - that that will cause people to die, just as surely as people have been dying the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

People will die if we cut \$10 billion from Medicaid.

I want to associate myself with the remarks of my colleague, Mr. Markey, who said this isn't just a budget decision. This is a moral decision that does get to the heart and soul of who we are as Americans, and what our priorities are. Are they moving ahead with the 70 billion dollars in tax cuts and making permanent the repeal of the estate tax for the wealthiest of Americans or are we going to consider what Hurricane Katrina revealed - not just the poor in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama - but that there are poor people in every city around our country. In my

city of Chicago, every rural area in this country, that are suffering because they can't now afford the health care that they need.

We need to be expanding Medicaid, not cutting Medicaid, when we look at those census numbers and 1.1 million people fell out of the middle class into poverty, and the number of uninsured have increased. It is shameful if we are here today to talk about more cuts in Medicaid. Let's improve it, let's not cut it.