

**Daniel J. Hilferty Opening Remarks at the  
Medicaid Health Plans of America Annual Meeting  
October 16, 2006**

Good morning and welcome to the Medicaid Health Plans of America (MHPA) Annual Conference. I have been asked to speak about “Bringing the Industry Together,” and it is our intention over the next few days to do just that.

Before I launch into my brief remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank Joy Wheeler for the tremendous job that she has done as Chair of MHPA. We will miss her steadfast leadership.

Kudos also to Thomas Johnson for the outstanding job that he has done in building MHPA into the formidable organization that it is today. During the past two years, Thomas’ leadership has:

- Increased membership from 17 to 25 plans
- Doubled supporting member participation from 11 to 20
- Doubled revenues of the Association
- Engaged in new areas including compliance, quality and Medicare Part D
- Expanded web casts and e-mail newsletters
- Achieved clout and relevance for MHPA in the industry

Thank you, Thomas, but as you know all too well, our work has only begun. In fact, all of these positive developments raise the most important question of all:

What is our Mission as an organization, and where should we devote our attention in the coming months and years?

For me, the answer is as clear as the neon signs that draw us into the casinos dominating the landscape of this desert oasis.

For me, the answer is an enthusiastic and unanimous commitment to trumpet the benefits of this great industry from coast to coast, as well as an agreement that we will lock arms and storm the hallways of Capitol Hill with a unified, articulate, passionate and irrefutable message about the benefits we provide to our nation’s most vulnerable citizens. This grassroots initiative must include us as leaders, providers, advocacy groups, and, most importantly, our members. Nothing short of a resounding endorsement of our approach to care should be acceptable.

If this sounds “pie in the sky” or naïve, I beg to differ! In state after state, we have seen examples of grassroots efforts that have produced a positive shift toward managed care programs to meet the health care needs of the Medicaid population, while at the same time returning fiscal sanity to budgets that can no longer sustain the increases that unbridled fee-for-service programs have fostered.

If we can do it state by state, we can certainly do it in Washington!

This message must be clearly stated and evidenced- based. It must include a continual refrain about access, quality and cost effectiveness. It must tug at the heartstrings of our elected representatives, yet at the same time appeal to their need to present fiscally responsible solutions to the health care needs of the poor and uninsured.

The truth is that while our State Medicaid directors continue to display creativity and vision in developing cost effective solutions, Medicaid is under attack at the federal level. The Deficit Reduction Act aims to save \$12 billion over the next five years, yet a study by the Lewin Group shows that the expansion of Medicaid managed care could save the country \$83 billion over the next ten years. I don't know about you, but where I come from that is a lot of money.

Again I say to you, we need to be walking the halls of Congress! We need to collectively and individually meet with key legislative members from each of the 50 states! We must demand the opportunity to testify before every relevant committee that will have us! We need to mount letter writing, e-mail, and phone call initiatives that will clearly show our impact on the lives of millions of Americans. We must stand up and be counted in spite of the negative perceptions of the commercial health insurance industry as a whole!

In this environment of aggressive efforts to ensure homeland security and fight the justified war against terror, where Congress in a matter of days can pass supplemental budgets in the tens of billions of dollars, it seems to me that they should be able to give a similar amount of attention and effort to provide accessible, quality health care for our most vulnerable citizens, and save billions of dollars at the same time. Friends, it seems logical to me. If it does to you, too, then we need to lock hands with our partners in the State Government and deliver a resounding message to our nation's capitol. Our message, if clearly and convincingly articulated, will ensure a healthier tomorrow for the millions of Americans that we serve each and every day.

Ladies and Gentlemen, aside from access, quality and efficiency, it is about dignity.

Do you know what this is? [shows a member ID card] This is dignity. Every time a member of one our plans shows this card to access care they do it with dignity. In that sense, in spite of their financial disadvantage, they are no different than you or me.

When an 18-year old woman, who is pregnant, scared and with nowhere else to turn shows this card and accesses needed OB and pre-natal care, she does it with dignity!

When the parent of an asthmatic child, or the son of a chronically ill mother, or the family of a disabled sibling shows this card at the point of service, they do it with dignity.

Each of them expects that they will receive the highest level of care available in this great country.

What they might not know, however, is that they are saving taxpayer dollars in the process as well.

So, my colleagues in this noble cause, I ask you to take up arms (figuratively) and join me in sending a message to our representatives in Washington, DC ... a message that shouts for all to hear:

- Managed Care works for Medicaid!
- Managed Care improves access!
- Managed Care improves quality!
- Managed Care saves money!

AND

- Managed Care fulfills its promise with dignity for our members.

Most of all, our message must convince our friends in Washington that, without adequate and fair funding, our promise will go unfulfilled. But if they choose to do the right thing, all involved will be winners!

If we pledge to work together in the effort, I assure you that we will succeed, and I assure you that the biggest winners of all will be members that we serve!

Thank you.