



## PRESERVING MEDICAID

### The Issue

Title XIX of the Social Security Act created Medicaid, a state-federal program that serves as the primary source of acute health care coverage and long-term care for the poor and elderly. Within broad national guidelines provided by the federal government, each state may establish its own eligibility criteria and determine the type, amount, duration, and scope of services. States may also set the rate of payments for providers. The Medicaid program varies considerably from state to state, as well as within each state.

The Medicaid program serves millions of low-income individuals and families. It is jointly funded from federal outlays and state general funds expenditures. Medicaid also devotes payments to Disproportionate Share Hospitals (DSH).

### **THE CHRISTUS Health Position: Support a stronger Medicaid program for the poor and underserved.**

The Medicaid program provides essential health benefits to millions of low-income children and adults who would otherwise not be able to afford health coverage. CHRISTUS Health advocates a strong federal presence in the Medicaid program and the overall expansion of the program to include more low-income applicants.

With the support of CHRISTUS Health, The Medicare Modernization Act made several important Medicaid changes.

CHRISTUS Health will work with health care organizations and members of Congress to oppose efforts to cut funds in future federal budgets. We urge Congress to extend Medicaid federal matching funds to avoid any cuts in the program.

CHRISTUS Health will work to support states who are in fiscal crisis protect the poor, elderly and disabled from state budget cuts and eligibility restrictions.

CHRISTUS Health will seek to strengthen the federal role in Medicaid, particularly regarding payments to hospitals, home care agencies and long-term care facilities.

*January 2007*