



May 22, 2009

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

The undersigned groups urge you to co-sponsor S. 700 “Ending Medicare Disability Waiting Period Act of 2009” sponsored by Senator Bingaman. This legislation would end the unjustifiable two-year waiting period for Missourians with disabilities waiting for Medicare eligibility.

People who become disabled and cannot work receive Social Security Disability Insurance, but they are forced to wait two years until they receive health care services through Medicare. People cannot afford the expensive COBRA coverage during those two years, and many Missourians are not eligible for Medicaid during those two years because the income limits are so low. National statistics show that nearly 40% of people with disabilities go without health care at some point during those two years and 24% have no health insurance for the entire two years.

People with disabilities severe enough to qualify for SSDI need access to health care. We would like to see the two-year waiting period ended immediately, but we support S. 700 which would phase-out the waiting period in ten years and immediately eliminate the waiting period for people with life-threatening conditions.

Again, we urge you to co-sponsor S. 700 and help Missourians with disabilities waiting for health care coverage.

Sincerely,

Disability Coalition Healthcare Reform

Missouri Health Care For All

Alliance on Mental Illness- NAMI St. Louis
American Jewish Congress – St. Louis
Catholic Charities of Kansas City, St. Joseph, Inc.
Catholic Charities of St. Louis
Center for Head Injury Services
Central Reform Congregation
Community Health in Partnership Services (CHIPS)
CWA Local 6355 – The Missouri State Workers Union
Deaconess Parish Nurse Ministries
Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph Human Rights Dept.
Disability Resource Association (DRA)
Disabled Citizens Alliance for Independence (DCAI)
Richard Green, Disability Advocate
GRO – Grass Roots Organizing
Humanity Works
Human Rights Action Service
Tina Hutchinson, Disability Advocate
Independent Living Center of Southeast Missouri
Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC)
Institute for Peace and Justice
Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis
Lane Tabernacle C.M.E. Church
Wayne Lee, Disability Advocate
Living Independently For Everyone (LIFE)
Lutheran Family and Children’s Services of Missouri
M.D. Pharmacy Inc.
Metropolitan Congregations United
Missouri Association of Social Welfare
Missouri Budget Project
Missouri Immigrant and Refugees Advocates
Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
Missouri Women in Trades
NAMI Missouri
National Conference for Community and Justice of Metropolitan St. Louis
National Council of Jewish Women – St. Louis Section
NorthEast Independent Living Services (NEILS)
Northside Community Center Housing, Inc.
Paraquad, Inc.
Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy
Rural Advocates for Independent Living
SEMO Alliance for Disability Independence
Services for Independent Living (SIL)

Sharon Smith, Disability Advocate
Southwest Center for Independent Living (SCIL)
St. Andrews Senior Solutions
St. Louis Area Jobs with Justice
The Whole Person
UCP Easter Seals Heartland
Sidney Watson, Center for Health Law Studies, St. Louis University School of Law
Monica Williams, Disability Advocate
Whole Health Outreach
Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice – Health Care Focus Group