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December 6, 2005

The Honorable Ernie Fletcher  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Kentucky  
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Governor Fletcher:

We understand that you face two important health care decisions: how to address the significant Medicaid deficit in the current fiscal year and how much funding to request of the 2006 General Assembly for Medicaid in the coming fiscal biennium. Since funding decisions reflect not only economic policies but also moral choices as well, we ask that you give priority in these budget decisions to the needs of poor and vulnerable people, especially pregnant women and their unborn children, the mentally ill, mentally retarded, children and adults in low-income families, the elderly, the disabled, and immigrants including the undocumented.

For the Catholic community, health and the healing ministry are rooted in the biblical vision to heal persons who are sick, with special protection of people who are poor and needy. We recognize and affirm the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death and the inherent dignity of every human being. We consider access to adequate health care to be a basic human right, necessary for the development and maintenance of life in accord with the dignity of human beings. A just society is one that protects and promotes the fundamental rights of its members – with special attention to meeting their basic needs, including the need for health care for people who are poor. Our Church has always sought to embody our Savior's concern for the sick. The Kentucky Catholic community, the largest non-governmental provider of health and human services to low-income families, is committed to providing services, including health care, to those who need it most. We also look to the federal and state governments to continue to fulfill their role in guaranteeing health care for the poor through Medicaid.

**Most Reverend  
Thomas C. Kelly, O.P.**  
Archbishop of Louisville

**Most Reverend  
John J. McRaith**  
Bishop of Owensboro

**Most Reverend  
Roger J. Foys**  
Bishop of Covington

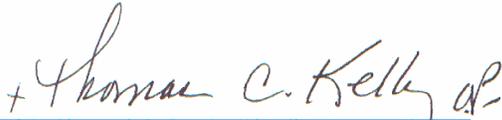
**Most Reverend  
Ronald W. Gainer**  
Bishop of Lexington

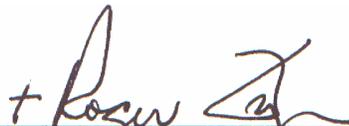
**Edward C. Monahan**  
Executive Director

We understand that there are surplus funds available for allocation in the current fiscal year. We ask that you apply available surplus money to the Medicaid deficit to insure that anyone who relies on Medicaid for his or her health care does not lose coverage or access to vital medical services. We also ask that you make the request for sufficient funding for the Medicaid program a priority in your next biennium budget proposal. No person should be denied health care because he or she cannot afford it.

Our state budget is more than a fiscal plan; it reflects our values as a people. These two budget choices have clear moral and human dimensions. In these difficult times, the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky urge you to keep uppermost in your mind and heart the needs of the "least of these" and render budget decisions that ensure that poor persons, God's very special people, are not neglected.

Sincerely,

  
+ Most Reverend Thomas C. Kelly, O.P.  
Archbishop of Louisville

  
+ Most Reverend Roger J. Foys  
Bishop of Covington

  
+ Most Reverend John J. McRaith  
Bishop of Owensboro

  
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