

**YOUR LETTERS**

## **Health Care Cuts Planned Despite Stimulus**

**April 4, 2009**

The March 27 article "AIG Rises To Its Defense" [Page 1] points to growing public discontent over misuse of government dollars. At this time of heightened focus on stimulus dollars and government accountability, Connecticut citizens are not paying attention to games being played in our own state.

The governor's budget takes \$1.3 billion in new federal Medicaid funds while cutting health care coverage. This ignores the intent of the stimulus plan that directs states "to minimize and avoid reductions in essential services." As President Barack Obama said to the governors in February: "This plan will also help ensure that you don't need to make cuts to essential services Americans rely on now more than ever."

Nonetheless, Gov. M. Jodi Rell proposes health care cuts that restrict medications and health care for people receiving Medicaid. These cuts include restricting access to psychiatric medications and eliminating the Medicare Part D wraparound that protects low-income older and disabled people. If passed, these people will be forced to choose between paying for medication, food or housing. When confronted with these choices, low-income people choose to forgo needed health care, leading to terrible and expensive consequences.

Apparently Connecticut intends to take stimulus money meant to ensure access to basic health care and use it in other areas. The costs of this will spill over in other uncontrollable ways.

The intent of the new federal dollars meant to sustain health care must be honored. At the very least, vulnerable residents should be held harmless in return for the stimulus plan's new health care money.

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