



**COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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March 17, 2009

The Honorable Dave Jones
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 23 (Jones)**– As Amended 2/23/09- **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Jones:

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is pleased to support AB 23. AB 23 would repeal certain changes to Medi-Cal eligibility requirements included in the 2008-09 State Budget. This is necessary to ensure that California qualifies for federal funds pursuant to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

As you know, the Federal Government began releasing the first two quarters of Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funding to states that qualify for an increase. FMAP is the federal match for Medicaid payments, and it indicates how much California is reimbursed for Medi-Cal program expenses. California’s share for the first two quarters of FMAP increases (retroactive to October 2008) is nearly \$2 billion.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act require states to maintain their Medicaid eligibility criteria at the July 1, 2008 level. As part of the 2008-09 budget package, California changed its redetermination process for children in the Medi-Cal program from annual to semi-annual, and therefore, the state is not currently eligible for the additional FMAP funding. These FMAP funds are critically needed to offset California’s budget deficit and ease the cash-flow crisis. It also counts towards the \$10 billion needed to avoid the “triggered” cuts in health and human services programs that were included in the recently-enacted 2009-10 budget package.

Additionally, FMAP funds are crucial to counties for the operation of desperately needed health and human service programs - particularly in light of the unprecedented demand for services that counties are experiencing with rising unemployment and our nation’s economic downturn. The San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Department reports that under the new FMAP rate for California, which will increase by approximately 11.6 percentage points, the department can anticipate an additional \$5 to \$6 million increase in federal Medicaid money.

For these reasons, the Board of Supervisors of San Bernardino County supports of AB 23. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lance Larson, the County’s Director of Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821. The Board thanks you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.