

**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUERTO RICO RESIDENT COMMISSIONER
LUIS G. FORTUÑO**

For Immediate Release
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**FORTUÑO LOBBIES FOR INCREASE IN MEDICAID BENEFITS FOR
PUERTO RICO**

Additional Medicaid funds would benefit 1.1 Million People on the Island

SAN JUAN, P.R. – Puerto Rico's resident commissioner, Luis Fortuño urged the congressional leadership in the federal House of Representatives and Senate to include more benefits for Puerto Rico and the other U.S. territories under Medicaid, as part of any legislation related to the second economic stimulus package that could be approved during the next few months. The request was made in a letter, signed by Fortuño and the representatives from Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa, and sent to Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi; James Clyburn, Majority Whip; John Digell, president of the Energy and Commerce Committee; Frank Pallone, president of the Health Subcommittee; and Harry Reid, majority leader in the U.S. Senate; and Max Baucus, president of the Senate Financial Services Subcommittee.

"As preparations for a possible second stimulus package are undertaken, we strongly urge you to include language to increase the FMAP's and to raise the statutory spending caps for Puerto Rico and the other territories", states the letter, which also explains the negative impact that the disparity has on the quality of health services offered to the American citizens living in the territories. "This situation has a negative impact on the health of the people of Puerto Rico and communities on the Island," said Fortuño.

This is the fourth time that the Resident Commissioner requests the Congressional leadership to increase Medicaid funds in Puerto Rico and the other territories, as part of a second economic stimulus package at a federal level. In addition to two previous letters sent in April and June, on July 22, Fortuño submitted a statement to the Health Subcommittee of the Health and Energy Committee in support of H.R. 5628, which proposes the inclusion of an increase in Medicaid grants to states en territories. Said legislation endorsed by Fortuño, would increase the Medicaid grant in Puerto Rico to \$268.1 million in 2008 and at least to \$272 million in 2009.

"I am convinced that the only way Congress can ensure the health of millions of American citizens living in Puerto Rico and other territories is by eliminating the spending caps and calculating the grants based on per capita income, just like in the other 50 states of the Nation," said Fortuño, while emphasizing that 1.1 million people in Puerto Rico currently benefit from Medicaid. Thanks to Fortuño's efforts, two years ago Congress approved a \$24 million dollar increase in Medicaid funds for Puerto Rico. At present the Island receives \$260.4 million in Medicaid funds.