

December 13, 2011

The Honorable G.M. Smith
Chairman of House Ways and Means Healthcare Subcommittee
420B Blatt Building
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Chairman G.M. Smith;

I am writing you today on behalf of the SC Speech–Language and Hearing Association (SCSHA) regarding the FY 12-13 Department of Health and Human Services budget request. In a meeting held in November with the Senate Finance Healthcare budget subcommittee, Director Keck noted that he did not intend to implement further cuts and we support that decision. SCSHA respectfully asks the subcommittee request that the Department of Health and Human Services hold true to that statement and not make any further cuts to Medicaid providers and services.

In April of this year, the Department cut shared therapy visits to 75 a year. This means that children receiving all 3 disciplines Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy/Speech Therapy (OT/PT/ST), each was cut to twice monthly. In addition, to the limits on services provided, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services reduced speech therapy provider payments by 10%.

We understand the state is in desperate need of reducing costs in the Medicaid system and have been supportive of the Department's decisions thus far. However, we request that no further reductions in speech language pathology services be made.

Sincerely,

Dr. Regina Lemmon, President
South Carolina Speech – Language and Hearing Association