

October 15, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chair
Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Dodd
Chair
Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid, Baucus, Harkin, and Dodd:

As you and your colleagues continue to work on health reform legislation, the over 250 undersigned coalitions and organizations urge you to ensure that the final legislation includes provisions to address health inequities and to reduce and eliminate health and health care disparities.

A recent report from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that from 2003 to 2006 the combined cost of health disparities totaled \$1.24 trillion in our country. This report also found that in the same time period, eliminating certain health disparities would have reduced direct health care expenditures by \$229.4 billion. These potential savings would be realized not only by improving the health of populations and communities that suffer from health disparities and barriers to health care and public health services, but by reducing the costs resulting from the disproportionate burden of disease faced by these populations. As a result, the final health reform legislation must, at a minimum, include:

- **Data Collection, Analyses, and Quality** to ensure collection and reporting of data on race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, geographic location, socioeconomic status, primary language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and, especially for subpopulation groups, as well as the development of standards for measuring these factors to improve health status and quality in health care.
- **Health Care Quality Improvements**, including the National Strategy for Quality Improvements in Health Care, Quality Measure Development, Community Health Needs Assessment, and Cultural and Linguistic Competence in health care and public health services by providing grants and demonstration projects to support research and community-based programs designed to reduce health disparities and barriers to health services through education and outreach, health promotion and disease prevention activities, and health literacy and services.
- **Health Workforce and Infrastructure Investment** to strengthen the recruitment, retention, training, and continuing education of health professionals, and increase their diversity, distribution, cultural competence, and knowledge of treating the unique needs of populations impacted by health disparities.

- **Access to Language Services for Limited English Proficient Patients**, including funding for these services under federal programs and new coverage programs, training of interpreters, and evaluation of and accountability for provision of these services.
- **Prevention and Wellness** provisions, including the National Prevention and Health Promotion Strategy and Prevention and Public Health Fund.

We want to underscore that our support for these crucial health equity provisions in no way signals an endorsement for reducing affordability protections in order to reach a specific spending threshold. Nor should providing affordable coverage prevent us from making progress on reducing health disparities. These provisions are critical to efforts to help us succeed in closing the gaps in health status and health care.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and support of issues impacting populations and communities that continue to suffer grave health and health care disparities. We would also like to thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request and offer our assistance in addressing this critical issue. Please contact Daniel E. Dawes, J.D., at (202) 682-5110 or ddawes@apa.org, if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

Access Community Health Network (ACCESS)
 Adventist HealthCare
 Advocates for Youth
 Aetna
 AIDS Action Baltimore
 AIDS Action Council
 AIDS Alabama
 AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
 Alzheimer's Foundation of America
 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
 American Academy of Physician Assistants
 American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry
 American Association for Health Education
 American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
 American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
 American Association of Pastoral Counselors
 American Association of People with Disabilities
 American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD)
 American College of Preventive Medicine
 American College of Sports Medicine
 American Dental Education Association
 American Diabetes Association
 American Foundation for the Blind
 American Heart Association/American Stroke Association
 American Kidney Fund
 American Music Therapy Association

American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Occupational Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Social Health Association
American Society of Nephrology (ASN)
Amputee Coalition of America
Arizona Advocacy network
Asian American Justice Center
Asian Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Healthcare – Michigan
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Professional Chaplains
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Nursing
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Autism Society
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
California Immigrant Policy Center
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership
Campaign for Mental Health Reform
CANN - Community Access National Network
Cascade AIDS Project
Center for Behavioral Epidemiology and Community Health
Center for Clinical Social Work/ABE
Center for Community Change
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
CHADD
CHAMP
Charles Drew University
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Alliance
Children's Dental Health Project
Children's Health Fund
CHIRLA - Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Citizen Action of New York
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
Citizen Action/Illinois
Coalition on Human Needs
Colorado Progressive Action
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Commission on the Public's Health System
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Commonhealth ACTION
Community Catalyst

Community Health Councils
Community Organizations in Action
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Council on Social Work Education
Department of Gerontology, San Diego State University
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Easter Seals
Faces & Voices of Recovery
Florida Citizen Action Network
Forward Montana
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Global Policy Solutions
Granite State Organizing Project
Grassroots Organizing (GRO)
Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA)
Harlem United
Having Our Say Coalition
Healthy Washington Coalition
Hepatitis Foundation International
HIV Medicine Association
HIVictorious, Inc
Human Rights Campaign
Idaho Community Action Network
Iowa Citizen Action Network
Ivan Walks and Associates, LLC
Japanese American Citizens League
Khmer Health Advocates, Inc
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center
Korean Resource Center
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
Latino Agenda for Healthcare Reform
Latino Association of Mont Pleasant
Latino Federation of Greater Washington
Latinos for National Health Insurance
Legal Voice
Maine People's Alliance
Make the Road New York
Maryland Hepatitis Coalition, Baltimore, MD
Meharry Medical College
Mental Health America
Metropolitan Community Churches
Michigan Citizen Action
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition
Montanans for Health Care
Morehouse School of Medicine
NAACP
NAMI
National AHEC Organization
National Alliance for Thrombosis and Thrombophilia

National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Counties
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of Mental Health Planning & Advisory Councils
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of Social Workers, West Virginia Chapter
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)
National Center for Children in Poverty
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Council of Urban Indian Health
National Council on Diversity in the Health Professions.
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
National Dental Association
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Foundation for Mental Health
National Health Equity Coalition
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Kidney Foundation
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latino Behavioral Health Association
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC)
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for the Advancement of Chamorro People
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.
National Research Center for Women & Families
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Health Network
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Native Research Network, Inc.
NDPeople.org

Nebraska Appleseed
New Hampshire Citizens Alliance for Action
New Jersey Citizen Action
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
North Central WV Democracy for America (NCWVDA)
Northeast Action
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Novo Nordisk
Ocean State Action
One America
Oregon Action
Out of Many, One Coalition
Pacific Hospital of Long Beach
PennAction
PHI-Health Care for Health Care Workers
PowerPac
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Progressive Maryland
ProgressOhio
Project Inform
Psychologists in Indian Country
Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans
Researchers against Inactivity-related Disorders (RID)
Resources for Cross Cultural Health Care
Retired Public Employees of Washington Chapter 3
Rural Organizing Project
Sea Mar Community Health Center
SEIU
Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)
South Carolina Fair Share
South Dakotans for Health Care Solutions
Southern AIDS Coalition
Strategic Health Resources
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.
TakeAction Minnesota
Tampa Bay Black Nurses Association
Tenants and Workers United (VA)
Tennessee Citizen Action
The AIDS Institute
The Archimedes Movement
The Carter Center Mental Health Program
The Disparities Solutions Center at Institute for Health Policy
The Institute for Family Health
The New York Immigration Coalition
Treatment Action Group (TAG)
U.S. Preventive Medicine, Inc.
UA National Center of Excellence in Women's Health.

United Action for Idaho
United American Nurses, AFL-CIO
United Spinal Association
United Vision for Idaho
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA)
Virginia Organizing Project
Voices for America's Children
Washington Community Action Network
Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans
West Virginia Citizen Action Group
World Institute on Disability
WV FREE (WV Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality)
YMCA of Greater Cleveland

CC: President of the United States Barack Obama
Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
Majority Whip James Clyburn
House Energy and Commerce Committee
House Energy and Commerce Committee, Subcommittee on Health
House Ways and Means Committee
House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Health
House Education and Labor Committee
Senate Finance Committee
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
Senate Indian Affairs Committee
Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus
Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus Health Taskforce
Congressional Black Caucus
Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust
Congressional Hispanic Caucus
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Health and the Environment Taskforce