

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](mailto: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 (NCWVDFA)  
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