

June 1, 2012

Dear Senator:

We write to urge you to co-sponsor S. 2474, the Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA) of 2012, introduced on April 26, 2012 by Senator Daniel Akaka along with Senator Daniel Inouye. The Congressional Tri-Caucus (made up of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus) has long championed this bill and we also support their efforts in the 112th Congress.

We recently celebrated the two year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), our historic health reform law. Communities of color and underserved communities stand to benefit from a number of the provisions of the law including immediate relief for many minority-owned small businesses through the small business tax credit; improved access to health insurance for millions of individuals—particularly those with pre-existing conditions—through insurance market reforms and the creation of new health insurance exchanges in 2014; the transformation of our sick care system into a wellness system through enhanced community-level efforts to reduce chronic diseases and improve health among population groups experiencing the greatest burden of chronic disease; and, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) release of new draft standards for collecting and reporting on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language and disability status, as well as plans by HHS to begin collecting additional data on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In addition, the ACA put in place infrastructure to address disparities through the establishment of Offices of Minority Health in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Agency for Health Care Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Furthermore, CMS has begun to pave the way to improving the quality and value of our health care system through the creation of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation and the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office.

The Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2012 recognizes that additional steps must be taken to specifically address health care disparities and provides additional tools necessary to address and eliminate health and health care disparities experienced by minority and underserved communities. The HEAA of 2012 focuses on ensuring that a full range of culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and public health services are available and accessible in every community, creates additional pipeline and training opportunities for minority-serving professional and allied health care workers, and incorporates strategies such as community-based prevention efforts to address a range of disease-specific, mental and behavioral health issues facing minority communities.

We also support the provisions in the HEAA that seek to further eliminate existing access barriers to affordable health insurance coverage, promote investments in innovative health care delivery methods and technologies, strengthen evidence-based and community-driven prevention and public health strategies, and advance research and data collection about the health needs and outcomes of our communities. These are all important steps towards eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities, and creating a sustainable health care system that can pave the road to health equity.

As organizations committed to reducing racial and ethnic health disparities, including the subpopulations within communities of color that face multiple barriers due to factors such as

immigration status, age, disability, obesity, sexual orientation, gender identity and limited English proficiency, we urge you to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation. The undersigned, many of whom have supported this legislation in the past, are ready to offer our expertise and networks to work with you to advance health equity. Please contact Priscilla Huang (phuang@apiahf.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

A Brave New Day

ActionAIDS

ADAP Advocacy Association

Advocates for Youth

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

AIDS Resource Center Ohio

AIDS United

Alliance for a Just Society

American Assn. for Marriage & Family Therapy

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Heart Association

American Kidney Fund

American Public Health Organization

American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery

American Society of Bariatric Physicians

Amnesty International USA

Asian American Health Coalition of Greater Houston- HOPE Clinic

Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian Center - Southeast Michigan

Asian Law Alliance

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian Pacific American Legal Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian Pacific Community in Action

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)

Asian Services In Action

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Black Cardiologists

Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)

Association of Nurses in AIDS Care

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)

Black Women for Wellness

Black Women's Health Imperative

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

CANN - Community Access National Network

Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice

Center for Independence of the Disabled
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.
Center for Popular Democracy
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Children First for Oregon
CHOW Project
Citizens Alliance Pro LGBTTA Health of Puerto Rico
Clinica Sierra Vista
Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc.
Colorado AIDS Project
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
Commission on the Public's Health System
Community Access National Network
Community Catalyst
Community Organizations in Action
Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Directors of Health Promotion and Education
Disability Policy Consortium
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Families USA
Family Equality Council
Florida Legal Services, Inc.
Gay & Lesbian Medical Association
Guam Communications Network
Hawaii Department of Health
Health Law Advocates of Louisiana
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA)
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Human Rights Campaign
IAMMM
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Institute of Social Medicine & Community Health
Iraqi Community Center
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
Jones and Chao, P.C.
Kalusugan Coalition, Inc.
Kathleen Diamond & Co
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Kokua Kalihi Valley
La Fe Policy Research & Education Center
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Latino Commission on AIDS
Lifelong AIDS Alliance
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
Maternal and Child Health Access

Mental Health America
MI LOLA
Miami Health Equity Project
MichUHCAN
Mo Hepatitis C Alliance
Morehouse School of Medicine
Moveable Feast
Movement is Life
MQVN Community Development Corp.
Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, University of Hawaii
Nana's Wish
National AHEC Organization
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network
National Cambodian American Health Initiative
National Center for Health and the Aging
National Center for Health in Public Housing
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians (NCAPIP)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN)
National Minority AIDS Council
National Nursing Centers Consortium
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
New Mexico Asian Family Center
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage
NICOS Chinese Health Association
NO/AIDS Task Force

North American Management
Obesity Action Coalition
OCA
Ohio AIDS Coalition
Ohio Asian American Health Coalition
Ohio Poverty Law Center
Opaka, LLC
Out of Many, One
Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services, Inc.
Papa Ola Lokahi (Native Hawaiian Health Board)
Public Justice Center
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. (RAMS)
Senior Moments
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR)
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Status C Unknown
Strazz Fitness
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.
The CHOW Project
The Obesity Society
Total Health Care
Transgender Law Center
Trust for America's Health
University of Washington
Utah Health Policy Project
Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans
Vietnamese Student Association
Virginia Organizing
Voices for America's Children
Washington Community Action Network
Westchester Children's Association
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families