

May 20, 2009

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you and your colleagues continue to work on health reform legislation, the undersigned coalitions, groups, and organizations urge you to ensure the legislation addresses health inequities and makes certain that health and health care disparities reduction and elimination is prioritized. We envision health reform legislation that ensures equity and accountability, and provides individuals with the ability to access comprehensive and culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and public health services and achieve health outcomes consistent with the rest of the population.

Striking disparities in health status exist among various communities and populations throughout the United States, which include shorter life expectancy and higher rates of chronic health conditions and disability. According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), disparities are also observed in most aspects of disease prevention and treatment, including care for mental health disorders and substance use, HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, oral health conditions, maternal and child health, respiratory disease, and end stage renal disease.

Health reform legislation provides a unique opportunity for addressing critical disparities and achieving many of the health equity recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) *Unequal Treatment* report and *Healthy People 2010*. These recommendations will reduce health disparities not only along lines of race and ethnicity, but also along lines of gender and geography and among other populations affected by health inequities.

Comprehensive health reform is essential to improving the health of populations and communities that have traditionally suffered health disparities and barriers to health care and public health services. We urge your support for including health equity provisions in health reform legislation.

We would 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,

AARP  
Adventist HealthCare  
Advocates for Youth  
Aetna  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Action Council  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDS Treatment Data Network  
AIDS/HIV Health Alternatives  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College Health Association  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Dental Education Association (ADEA)  
American Diabetes Association  
American Group Psychotherapy Association  
American Heart Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Social Health Association  
American Stroke Association  
Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
Asian American Justice Center  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved  
Association of Professional Chaplains  
Autism Society of America  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Broward House  
Campaign for Mental Health Reform  
CANN - Community Access National Network  
Center for Advancing Health  
Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions at Western University of Health Sciences  
Center for School Mental Health - University of Maryland  
Central City Health Corporation  
CHADD – Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Child Welfare League of America

Children's Dental Health Project  
Clinical Social Work Association  
**Coalition on Human Needs**  
Colorado AIDS Project  
Colorado Progressive Coalition  
Community Catalyst  
Community Health Councils  
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)  
Competech Smartcard Solutions (New Jersey)  
Council of Accredited MPH Programs  
Council on Social Work Education  
Denver Area Youth Services (DAYS)  
Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)  
Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action  
External Partners Group for the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
F.O.U.N.D.  
Families USA  
First Focus  
Hispanic Federation  
HIV Medicine Association  
HIVictorious, Inc  
Housing Works  
Human Rights Campaign  
Idaho Community Action Network  
International Women's Health Coalition  
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)  
Latino Agenda for Healthcare Reform  
Latino Federation of Greater Washington  
Latinos for National Health Insurance  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
Medicare Rights Center  
Mental Health America  
Montanans for Health Care  
Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council  
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals  
NAMI  
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse  
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors  
National Association of People With AIDS  
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH)

National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)  
**National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN)**  
National Center for Children in Poverty  
National Center for Law and Economic Justice  
National Coalition of Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Organizations  
National Committee for Quality Assurance  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Forum for Latino Healthcare Executives  
National Foundation for Mental Health  
National Health Equity Coalition  
National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved  
National Health Law Program  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)  
National Minority AIDS Council  
National Puerto Rican Coalition  
National REACH Coalition  
National Urban League  
National Women and AIDS Collective  
Northern Colorado AIDS Project  
Oregon Action  
Ortho  
Out of Many, One Coalition  
Pan Pacific Consulting  
Papa Ola Lokahi (Native Hawaiian Health Board)  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Psychiatry Section of the National Medical Association  
School Social Work Association of America  
Society for Public Health Education  
South Dakotans for Health Care Solutions  
STOP AIDS Project  
Strategic Health Resources  
Student National Dental Association  
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.  
The Carter Center Mental Health Program  
The Disparities Solutions Center at Institute for Health Policy Massachusetts General Hospital  
The Institute for Family Health  
The National Partnership for Women & Families  
The National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at Georgetown University  
The National Women's Law Center  
Tourette Syndrome Association  
Treatment Access Expansion Project  
Virginia Organizing Project

Western Pacific Med/Corp  
Westside HIV Community Center

CC: 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 Black Caucus Health Braintrust  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus  
The Honorable Jeff Bingaman  
The Honorable Christopher Dodd  
The Honorable Tom Harkin  
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski