



H.R. 3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act

Some of the Letters And Statements of Support

AARP

Main Street Alliance (Small Business Group)

American Medical Association

American College of Physicians

National Medical Association

American Academy of Nursing

American Public Health Association

National Association of Community Health Centers

Healthcare for America Now

Families USA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2009

Contact

Jim Dau or Jordan McNerney
202-434-2560

AARP on House TriComm Health Care Reform Bill:

“This bill would make great strides for all of our members and their families.”

WASHINGTON—AARP CEO Barry Rand released the following statement following the introduction of health care reform legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives from Chairmen Charles Rangel, Henry Waxman and George Miller.

“We are pleased by the House TriCommittee’s health care reform bill, which makes important strides towards making sure that every American has access to affordable, quality health care choices.

“Those without access to employer sponsored plans face serious roadblocks that block affordable insurance choices based on their age and health status. Those of our members in Medicare pay close to 30% of their incomes on out-of-pocket expenses and they deserve relief, especially in the prescription drug doughnut hole, where they get no benefit while paying premiums.

“This bill would make great strides for all of our members and their families.

“It would help abolish those insurance market practices that keep people on the outside looking in based only on their age and health status. It recognizes that expanding coverage means little if a person can’t afford it, providing meaningful relief to those with modest incomes and capping out-of-pocket expenses for plans in the Exchange.

“The House TriCommittee bill would also close over time the Medicare prescription drug ‘doughnut hole’—a major concern for our members.

“We look forward to working with Chairmen Rangel, Waxman and Miller, as well as their colleagues in both parties and both chambers of Congress to build on current momentum and enact comprehensive health care reform in 2009.”



A big vision for small business

July 15, 2009

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the thousands of small business owners in the Main Street Alliance network, I want to extend our organization's sincere thanks to you and the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives for introducing the "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009" (H.R. 3200). This historic legislation encompasses the principles and objectives of Main Street small business owners to achieve comprehensive reform of our nation's health care system, giving small employers real choices in affordable health coverage including the option of a competitive public health insurance plan. We are proud to give this legislative framework our strong support and pledge to work with you and your colleagues toward its adoption.

This legislation will help make America's small businesses more competitive by giving them greater control over one of the most costly and unpredictable aspects of doing business: the spiraling costs of providing quality health coverage. H.R. 3200 includes essential reforms that address the key priorities our small business owners hold: promoting transparency and giving small businesses simplified choices through a Health Insurance Exchange, increasing bargaining power and driving down costs through a strong public health insurance option that will keep private insurers honest, prohibiting pre-existing condition exclusions and ending discrimination against small groups based on health status, and making coverage more affordable through a system of shared commitment. These elements are essential to making health care work for Main Street. We are particularly pleased that the bill includes a strong public health insurance plan as one of the Exchange options; a strong public plan is essential to control costs, encourage innovation, and provide the competition to keep private insurers accountable.

The Main Street Alliance believes that health care reform must be a shared responsibility of all stakeholders – individuals, businesses, providers, insurers and the government. The Alliance is pleased to see that H.R. 3200 asks all parties to play a role in improving health care. As long as truly affordable coverage options are available, we support giving employers the choice of either offering coverage to employees or making a contribution toward the cost of that coverage. We appreciate the inclusion of tax credits to help smaller, low-wage businesses offset the expense of providing coverage, as well as subsidies to assist low-income employees and their families to afford their contribution.

We have a historic opportunity to confront the nation's health care crisis, and the "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009" is an important step in seizing that opportunity. The Main Street Alliance extends its strong support for this legislation, and we look forward to working with you and other leaders in Congress and the Administration to see comprehensive health care reform enacted into law this year.

Sincerely,

Dave Mason
Legislative and Policy Director
The Main Street Alliance



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

July 16, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the American Medical Association, I am writing to express our appreciation and support for H.R. 3200, the "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009." This legislation includes a broad range of provisions that are key to effective, comprehensive health system reform. We urge members of the House Education and Labor, Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means Committees to favorably report H.R. 3200 for consideration by the full House.

In particular, we are pleased that the bill:

- Promises to extend coverage to all Americans through health insurance market reforms;
- Provides consumers with a choice of plans through a health insurance exchange;
- Includes essential health insurance reforms such as eliminating coverage denials based on pre-existing conditions;
- Recognizes that fundamental Medicare reforms, including repeal of the sustainable growth rate formula, are essential to the success of broader health system reforms;
- Encourages chronic disease management and care coordination through additional funding for primary care services, without imposing offsetting payment reductions on specialty care;
- Addresses growing physician workforce concerns;
- Strengthens the Medicaid program;
- Requires individuals to have health insurance, and provides premium assistance to those who cannot afford it;
- Includes prevention and wellness initiatives designed to keep Americans healthy;
- Makes needed improvements to the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative that will enable greater participation by physicians; and

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
July 16, 2009
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- Initiates significant payment and delivery reforms by encouraging participation in new models such as accountable care organizations and the patient-centered medical home.

The AMA looks forward to further constructive dialogue during the committee mark-up process. We pledge to work with the House committees and leadership to build support for passage of health reform legislation to expand access to high quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

This year, the AMA wants the debate in Washington to conclude with real, long overdue results that will improve the health of America's patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Maves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Maves" clearly distinguishable.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA

July 15, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
House Ways & Means Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen:

On behalf of the 129,000 internal medicine physician and medical student members of the American College of Physicians, I am writing to express our appreciation and support for the many policies in the America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009, H.R. 3200, to provide Americans with access to affordable coverage, ensure a sufficient number of primary care physicians, and institute payment and delivery system reforms to help physicians produce the best possible outcomes for patients. ACP is the second largest physician membership organization in the United States. Our initial review of H.R. 3200 as introduced on July 14th, is that it is closely aligned with ACP's top priorities for health reform. Accordingly, ACP supports approval of the bill by the three House committees, and following mark up, we expect to recommend passage of H.R. 3200 by the full House of Representatives, pending review of any amendments made by the committees. As noted below, there are several issues that we ask be addressed during the mark-up to ensure that the payment reforms to support primary care accomplish the desired goals.

- **Coverage:** The bill creates a pluralistic framework so that all Americans will have access to affordable health insurance coverage. We are pleased that the bill will provide people with a wide choice of health plans, including the option of maintaining their current health plan. ACP supports the bill's proposals to reform the insurance industry so that coverage no longer is out of reach for people who have pre-existing conditions or who develop an illness while insured. We support sliding scale tax credits, coverage of evidence-based preventive services with no cost-sharing, and expansion of Medicaid to cover the poor. ACP believes that a public plan could appropriately be offered if physician and patient participation is voluntary and if the plan is funded through premiums—as H.R. 3200 requires. We also believe that the public plan should be able to use innovative payment models to support patient-centered primary care, and appreciate the reference in the bill to medical homes as being among the new payment and delivery models that the public plan should consider adopting. We believe that payments to physicians under the public plan should be competitive with those of other insurers and not replicate flaws, such as the undervaluation of primary care, in existing payment models. We look forward to continued dialogue on the design of the public plan option.

Although we do not have policy on the specific tax surcharge provisions called for by the bill, the College urges Congress to consider a variety of approaches to finance coverage including ones that encourage individuals to make prudent decisions affecting use of health care resources. We also support shared responsibility for funding health care reform, including requirements that employers contribute to coverage and that individuals obtain coverage once affordable options are available to them.

- **Workforce:** The bill would establish a national health workforce policy to help set goals and policies to achieve a sufficient and optimal number and distribution of physicians and other clinicians.

We applaud the committees for including policies to increase the numbers of physicians in primary care internal medicine, family medicine and geriatrics, including increased funding and creation of new pathways to provide scholarships and loan forgiveness to primary care physicians who agree to practice in areas of need and policies to facilitate increased training in office-based primary care practices. We also agree on the need to increase GME training positions for primary care specialties.

- **Payment and delivery system reforms:** We are very pleased that the bill would eliminate the accumulated Medicare SGR payment cuts, provide a new framework for future updates that allow for spending on physician services to increase at a rate greater than GDP, and create a higher spending baseline target for evaluation and management and preventive services, including those associated with primary care.

We applaud the committees for increasing Medicare payments for designated services provided by primary care physicians. The language in H.R. 3200 changes the definition of “primary care services” from the language in the draft bill in a way that could exclude many primary care internists and other primary care physicians from being eligible for the bonus. We have shared our suggestions for resolving this problem with your staff and ask that the eligibility criteria be modified during mark up to ensure that the Secretary incorporates the services typically provided by general internists and other primary care services. ACP also requests that the committees increase the primary care bonus to at least 10%. We strongly support the proposal to increase Medicaid payments for primary care to be equivalent to Medicare.

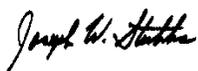
We strongly support the dedicated funding that is provided to pilot-test, on a national scale, the idea of paying physicians for care coordination in a qualified Patient-Centered Medical Home. ACP will continue to provide Congress with ideas on strengthening the payment and delivery system reforms to accomplish the goals of increasing the numbers of physicians in primary care fields.

The College strongly supports the proposal to fund independent, transparent and evidence-based research on the comparative effectiveness of different treatments to inform physician-patient decision-making. We believe that CER will lead to better care for patients, not denials of needed care. We also are pleased by provisions in the bill to simplify and reduce the costs associated with interactions with health plans.

In summary, we are pleased that America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009 includes policies on coverage, workforce, payment and delivery system reform, primary care, comparative effectiveness research, and administrative simplification that are strongly supported by the College. Since we recognize that changes will be made as health reform legislation makes its way through both the House and Senate, we intend to continue to provide you, the White House, and your colleagues in the House and Senate with our views on potential changes and how they would reflect ACP’s priorities and policies.

We are committed to doing all that we can to get legislation enacted this year to ensure that all Americans will have access to affordable coverage and to a general internist or other primary care physician. America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009, H.R. 3200, will go a very long way toward achieving these goals. ACP looks forward to H.R. 3200 being reported out of the committees and we expect to issue a strong recommendation for its passage by the House of Representatives, pending review of any amendments.

Yours truly,



Joseph W. Stubbs, MD, FACP
President



Contact: Alisa Mosley
202.347.1895

Affordable Health Choices Act is an Excellent Step toward Health Care Reform

July 15, 2009, Washington, DC...The National Medical Association (NMA) commends the Affordable Health Choices Act. The bill includes many of the provisions to which the NMA has long been committed. "Yesterday was a monumental day in the history of health care for our country with the introduction of America's Affordable Health Choice Act of 2009. The bill will provide unprecedented coverage for all Americans. This is especially important for communities of color who are a disproportionate share of the uninsured," said Carolyn Barley Britton, M.D., MS, president, National Medical Association. "There are several key components that will benefit our communities across the country," she added.

"The NMA is pleased with the key provisions in the bill as it relates to coverage and choice, affordability, cost containment, and prevention and wellness. We commend Speaker Pelosi's exceptional leadership. In addition, chairmen Rangel, Waxman and Miller have done an extraordinary job on behalf of all Americans, given such a short schedule," said Mohammad N. Akhter, M.D., MPH, executive director, National Medical Association. "The Affordable Health Choices Act is a bill that exemplifies true consensus amongst leaders in a timely and efficient manner," he added.

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Founded in 1895, the National Medical Association is the nation's oldest and largest medical association representing the interests of more than 30,000 African-American physicians and their patients. The NMA has repeatedly advocated for policies that would assure equitable and quality health care for all people.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING

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July 16, 2009

The American Academy of Nursing (AAN) strongly supports the **America's Affordable Health Choice Act of 2009, H.R. 3200**, which will make our health care system affordable, increase quality, and create access for the estimated 46 million Americans who are uninsured and the 17 million who are underinsured. The bill achieves these goals by doing the following:

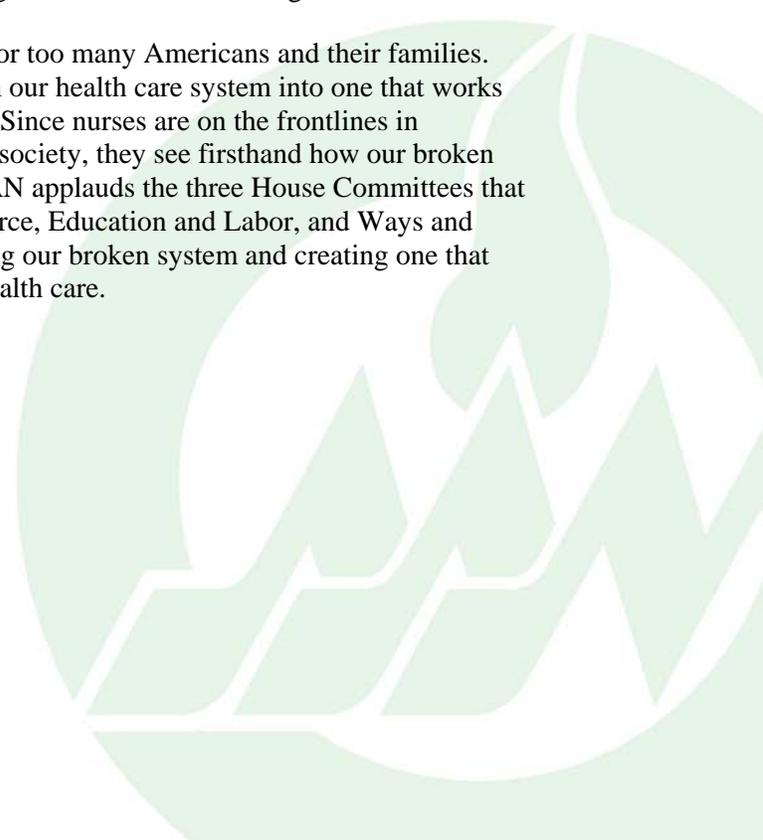
- Lowering costs by eliminating co-pays and deductibles for preventative care, removing rate increases for pre-existing conditions, and guaranteeing affordable oral, hearing, and vision coverage for children.
- Greater personal choice is given by letting patients keep their health care providers and current health plan if they are satisfied with them, but also creates a public health insurance option to allow more competition in the market place.
- Higher quality by allowing patients and their providers to make decisions regarding care.
- Recruiting and retaining more primary care providers which will increase access to care.
- Coverage of mental health care services.
- Ends the practice of denying coverage for pre-existing conditions.
- Lifts the lifetime limit policy on how much insurance companies will pay.
- Gives patients more opportunities to make life changing decisions regarding career and family without having to worry about losing their health care coverage.

The health care system as it is now is not working for too many Americans and their families. The AAN believes that now is the time to transform our health care system into one that works for all Americans regardless of their ability to pay. Since nurses are on the frontlines in delivering health care to the most vulnerable in our society, they see firsthand how our broken health care system fails in its current form. The AAN applauds the three House Committees that oversaw the writing of the bill (Energy and Commerce, Education and Labor, and Ways and Means). H.R. 3200 will go a long way toward fixing our broken system and creating one that gives all individuals access to affordable, quality health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Ford-Roegner".

Pat Ford-Roegner MSW, RN, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer





Protect, Prevent, Live Well

July 15, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Waxman, Rangel and Miller:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association (APHA), the oldest and most diverse organization of public health professionals and advocates in the world dedicated to promoting and protecting the health of the public and our communities, I write in strong support of H.R. 3200, the America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009.

Earlier this year, APHA released its 2009 Agenda for Health Reform which outlines APHA's top priorities for health reform legislation. We are very pleased that H.R. 3200 addresses many of the critical changes we believe are needed to improve the public's health and specifically, to start moving from a system that focuses on treating the sick to one that focuses on keeping people healthy. In particular, we are pleased that your legislation would:

- Develop a national prevention and wellness strategy that would set specific measurable goals and objectives for improving the health of the U.S. through federally-supported prevention, health promotion, and public health programs.
- Expand the work and coordination of the Community Preventive Services Task Force and the U.S. Preventive Services Taskforce to improve effective community-based and clinical prevention services and to improve dissemination of recommendations about effective interventions to public health departments, practitioners, policymakers, health systems and others.
- Require Medicare, Medicaid and private insurers to provide first dollar coverage for highly rated, evidence-based preventive health services.

- Establish a Public Health Investment Fund that strengthens the investment in community health centers, the public health workforce, and also funds a Prevention and Wellness Trust to fund community-based prevention and wellness services, core public health infrastructure and activities at the state and local levels, and core public health infrastructure and activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Require an annual report containing a description of national, regional, or state changes in health or health care, as reflected by a set of key health indicators developed by the newly created Assistant Secretary for Health Information.
- Collect data on the health and health care of populations that have traditionally experienced health disparities and prioritize reducing health disparities in the prevention and wellness strategy and community services grants.
- Improve data collection on health workforce needs and increase the supply, distribution, diversity and cultural competence of the public health and primary care workforce, including establishing and supporting the training of a Public Health Workforce Corps, supporting graduate medical education in preventive medicine and primary care, expanding the National Health Service Corps, and increasing funding for health professions diversity programs.
- Create a new public insurance option that provides consumers with a competitive alternative to private insurance coverage offered through the Health Insurance Exchange.

Additionally, while not included in H.R. 3200, we strongly urge you to continue efforts to work with the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget to develop a methodology that scores the long term savings accruing to medical and other sectors as a result of effective prevention programs and services.

We thank you again for including strong public health provisions in this critical legislation and look forward to working with you and your colleagues on your committees as you move forward with health reform legislation this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E)
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi



July 15, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Waxman, Chairman Rangel, and Chairman Miller –

On behalf of the more than 1,200 health centers across the country, our more than 100,000 staff and board members, and our more than 18 million patients, I write today to express our profound gratitude and our strong support for the “America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009”.

In Community Health Centers across the country, we witness the urgent need for fundamental health reform every single day, in the faces and struggles of our patients who for too long have been left behind by our current dysfunctional health care system. Your legislation would not only extend meaningful health coverage to most of the 46 million Americans who are currently uninsured, but would make the investments necessary to bring community-based primary and preventive care to every individual and community in America.

In particular, we commend the investment your legislation would make in the continued expansion of health centers through the Public Health Investment Fund. These resources will bring new health centers to needy communities currently without them, will expand capacity and stabilize existing centers, and will ensure the full range of medical, dental, mental health and pharmacy services is available to every health center patient. The health center model of care has been proven, time and again, to save our health system money and keep patients healthy, and this investment builds on that record of success.

Beyond the infrastructure investments in the legislation, we are particularly supportive of:

- The expansion of **Medicaid** to cover all individuals up to 133% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This will ensure that millions more low-income Americans will be covered for the comprehensive benefits they need, while at the same time ensuring health centers are able to receive appropriate, predictable reimbursement, for the care they provide.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers

- The improvements in training, payment and incentive programs all designed to strengthen the **primary care workforce and primary care services**, a necessary step toward ensuring meaningful access to care.
- The requirement that exchange plans contract with “**Essential Community Providers**”, including Health Centers and other safety-net providers, which will assure access to care for the residents of underserved areas who gain coverage through Exchange plans.

Our 43 years of experience in caring for America’s medically disenfranchised has taught us three things: that health reform must achieve universal coverage that is **available** and **affordable** for everyone, and especially to low-income individuals and families; that such coverage must be **comprehensive**, with emphasis on **prevention and primary care**; and that it must guarantee everyone access to a **medical or health care home**, where they can receive **high quality, cost effective care** for their health needs.

Your legislation meets those goals, and represents a strong blueprint for an American health care system that expands access, improves quality, and controls costs. We wholeheartedly support the bill and look forward to working with you to ensure its successful consideration and passage.

Sincerely,

Dan Hawkins

Senior Vice-President, Public Policy and Research

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

For Immediate Release
July 14, 2009

Contact: Jacki Schechner 202-454-6196
Doug Gordon 202-822-5200

Health Care for America Now Supports House Health Reform Bill

Washington, DC – [Health Care for America Now](#) (HCAN) – the nation’s largest health care campaign – released the following statement today recognizing the tri-committee’s House bill on health care reform:

Richard Kirsch, National Campaign Manager, [Health Care for America Now](#):

“The House’s legislation shows that achieving quality, affordable health care for all in 2009 is absolutely possible.

This bill will make health coverage more affordable both for those who have it through their job and for those who have to find coverage on their own. It builds on what works in our current health care system and starts the process of fixing what doesn’t – including stopping health insurance companies from denying care based on pre-existing conditions.

The House bill includes key provisions like an exchange that includes both private insurance plans and a new public health insurance option and shared responsibility between individuals, employers, and government - key elements to achieving President Obama’s goals of lowering costs, covering everyone, and keeping the insurance companies honest. “

ABOUT US:

[Health Care for America Now](#) (HCAN) is a national grassroots campaign of [more than 1000 organizations](#) representing more than 30 million people dedicated to winning quality, affordable health care we all can count on in 2009. [Health Care for America Now](#) and its [principles](#) for reform are supported by **President Obama** and [more than 195 Members of Congress](#). We are doctors, nurses, community organizations, small business owners, faith-based groups, people of color, seniors, children’s and women’s rights groups, and labor unions. Our Steering Committee includes: [ACORN](#), [AFL-CIO](#), [AFSCME](#), [American Federation of Teachers](#), [Americans United for Change](#), [Campaign for America’s Future](#), [Campaign for Community Change](#), [Center for American Progress Action Fund](#), [Children’s Defense Fund Action Council](#), [Communications Workers of America](#), [International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America \(UAW\)](#), [MoveOn.org](#), [NAACP](#), [National Council of La Raza](#), [National Education Association](#), [National Women’s Law Center](#), [SEIU](#), [JFCW](#), [USAction](#), [Women’s Voices. Women Vote](#), and [Working America](#).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Contact: David Lemmon
Geraldine Henrich-Koenis
Bob Meissner
(202) 628-3030

NEW HOUSE BILL WOULD SECURE HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY FOR AMERICA'S FAMILIES

Today, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Committee Chairmen Henry Waxman, Charlie Rangel, and George Miller introduced their unified health care reform bill. The following is the statement of Ron Pollack, Executive Director of Families USA, about this development:

“The House health care reform bill provides the right prescription for America’s ailing health care system. It offers an effective set of remedies to ensure that virtually all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable health coverage and care.

“The bill effectively delivers the needed changes that families need:

- improved **affordability** so that no one is priced out of coverage and care;
- **choice** of health plans, including one’s current plan as well private plans and a robust public plan option;
- **stability** so that coverage can’t be lost or taken away; and
- **accountability** by insurance companies so that they don’t continue to deny or charge enormous premiums to people with pre-existing health conditions.

“This bill deserves to be enacted promptly, especially because more than 6,000 people are losing health coverage every single day.

“Families USA endorses the newly introduced House health care reform bill, and we will work tirelessly to see that it is enacted into law this year.”

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Families USA is the national organization for health care consumers. It advocates for high-quality, affordable health coverage for everyone.