



November 19, 2008

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 200510

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 200510

Chairman Edward Kennedy  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 200510

Ranking Member Michael Enzi  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 200510

Chairman Max Baucus  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 200510

Ranking Member Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 200510

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

House Minority Leader John Boehner  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman John Dingell  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Joe Barton  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Charles Rangel  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman George Miller  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Buck McKeon  
United States House of Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders, Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

Our nation is in a period of unprecedented economic uncertainty, and the current financial crisis threatens to depress economic growth for a prolonged period of time and lead to hardship for families and businesses, while government budgets will be under stress. The new Congress and President must get our economy back on track and that depends on addressing health care.

We, a diverse group of organizations representing tens of millions of Americans, urge you to include meaningful health care reform as one of the first domestic priorities of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. We stand ready to support the Congress and President in national reform efforts to address our health care crisis.

We cannot afford to delay identifying and implementing solutions to the disturbing health care trends that undermine the economic security of our families, limit the productivity of our



workforce, inhibit job creation and wage growth, and threaten to crowd out investments in energy, education, and infrastructure.

Those trends are well known to most Americans. Between 2000 and 2007, family premiums for employer-provided coverage rose 5.4 times faster than median worker earnings. Year after year, health care costs grow at a rate that outpaces our overall economic and wage growth. Health care expenses drive families into debt; nearly half of foreclosures were caused at least in part by a medical problem. Families forgo necessary care and jeopardize the health and productivity of the next generation of American students and workers. Each year we spend more on health care, yet our spending is not improving the health status of millions of Americans.

Over the last 20 years, whether the economy was growing or contracting, the number of Americans without quality health insurance continued to climb. The undersigned organizations share a common understanding that expanded coverage is an integral component of a comprehensive solution to contain health care costs and improve health outcomes.

We stand ready to support you in a national conversation to fix health care, to focus on prevention and chronic care, to give patients more tools to manage their health, to give all Americans meaningful coverage, and build a more sustainable health care system that consistently delivers value to all of us, and that strengthens us as a nation. We pledge our support for such a conversation as well as an early effort to secure meaningful health care reform.

Sincerely,

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| AARP  | American Diabetes Association                       |
| Alzheimer’s Association                       | American Heart Association                          |
| American Academy of Family Physicians         | American Medical Women’s Association                |
| American Academy of Pediatrics                | American Network of Community Options and Resources |
| American Academy of Physician Assistants      | American Nurses Association                         |
| American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  | American Optometric Association                     |
| American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry | American Psychiatric Administration                 |
| American Association of Nurse Anesthetists    | American Psychological Association                  |
| American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network | American Public Health Association                  |
| American Dental Education Association         | American Stroke Association                         |
|   | Ascension Health                                    |



Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum	Herndon Alliance
Association for Community Affiliated Plans	HIV Medicine Association
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now	Huntington's Disease Society of America
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs	Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses	Legal Action Center
Association of University Centers on Disabilities	Lutheran Services in America
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law	Mental Health America
Campaign for Mental Health Reform	Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)
Catholic Health Association of the United States	National Academies of Practice
Catholic Health Initiatives	National Alliance on Mental Illness
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.	National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
Center for Science in the Public Interest	National Association for Home Care and Hospice
CHADD, Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	National Association of Community Health Centers
Children's Defense Fund	National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
Child Welfare League of America	National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
Coalition on Human Needs	National Association of School Nurses
Community Catalyst	National Association of Social Workers
Consumers Union	National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance	The National Beauty Culturists' League Incorporated
Easter Seals	National Coalition on Health Care
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
Families USA	National Consumers League
Family Voices	
Health Care For America Now (HCAN)	



National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of La Raza

National Council on Aging

National Education Association

National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association

National Health Council

National Health Law Program (NHeLP)

National Hemophilia Foundation

National Medical Association

National Partnership for Women and Families

National Respite Coalition

National Senior Citizens Law Center

National Women's Health Network

National Women's Law Center

NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Patient Privacy Rights

PHI Health Care for Health Care Workers Campaign

PICO National Network

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Project Inform

Raising Women's Voices

Research!America

Service Employees International Union

Small Business Majority

State Associations of Addiction Services

United Jewish Communities

United Spinal Association

USAction

U.S. Public Interest Research Group

Voice of the Retarded

Women of Reform Judaism