



## Summary of the National Council of La Raza's Health Policy Priorities

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—is pleased to submit the following summary of recommendations to the transition team of President-elect Barack Obama. NCLR is greatly appreciative of the commitment that President-elect Obama has already made to addressing minority health issues and hopes to collaborate with the Administration to advance policies that effectively eliminate disparities from our health care system. Accompanying documents elaborate on the requests below.

While comprehensive health care reform continues to be NCLR's top priority, NCLR recommends these additional short- and long-term priorities.

### Short-Term Priorities

- 1) Increase the impact of public health coverage programs in Latino communities** by repealing the five-year waiting period and other arcane restrictions that deny legal immigrant children and pregnant women access to the federally funded State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and Medicaid.
- 2) Reinforce laws that improve access to language services** by immediately reaffirming existing protections to language services in Executive Order 13166. In addition, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services should release guidance that clarifies the ability of health care providers to be reimbursed for language services provided through Medicaid and SCHIP.
- 3) Evaluate and revamp the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights** through an assessment of staffing and funding needs, transparency in reporting, and increased resources for public outreach.
- 4) Address racial and ethnic health disparities** through support of H.R. 3014, the "Health Equity and Accountability Act." In addition, improve collection of race, ethnicity, and primary language data, requiring that all federal agencies and programs collect such data.
- 5) Support community-based health outreach and promotion** by creating a formal support system to implement and evaluate health promotion and outreach activities that are tailored to reach communities with low levels of health literacy, limited English proficiency, and economic barriers to health care.

### Long-Term Priorities

- 1) Improve reimbursement for language services provided in health care settings** by increasing the federal match for language services under Medicaid and SCHIP.
- 2) Support longitudinal studies of Latino health** by funding the Study of Latinos and ancillary studies.
- 3) Pass a comprehensive health care reform package that is inclusive.**