

February 11, 2009

Dear Conferee:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our strong support for the data collection provisions included in the HIT section of the Senate-passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We urge you to ensure that these provisions are included in the final enacted version of the bill. The data collection language would help us build a 21st century electronic health information system that allows us to identify and reduce disparities in access and quality of care.

There is considerable evidence that the collection and reporting of standardized data on race, ethnicity, primary language, and gender can help eliminate health disparities. Unfortunately, the current set of certification criteria for electronic systems only require collection of name, date of birth, and gender data. The Senate-passed provisions would require the development of standards and criteria for electronic systems to enable the collection of demographic information that includes, at a minimum, race, ethnicity, primary language, and gender.

This common-sense language carries no cost to the federal government, yet takes us a significant step closer to achieving a more equitable, high performing health care system that serves all patients. We ask that you keep the Senate-passed data collection language in the final enacted bill.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

National Partnership for Women & Families
AARP
AFL-CIO
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of People with Disabilities
American College of Cardiology
American College of Physicians
American Heart Association/American Stroke Association
American Public Health Association
Americans for Democratic Action
Asian American Justice Center
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Black Women's Health Imperative

Business and Professional Women/USA
Center for Medical Consumers
Childbirth Connection
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Communication Workers of America
Community Catalyst
Consumers Union
Families USA
Health Care For All
Hmong National Development
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace &
and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Japanese American Citizens League
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
Laotian American National Alliance
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Legal Momentum
Multicultural Health Network
NAACP
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association of Neighborhoods
National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Congress of American Indians
National Health Law Program (NHeLP)
National Hispanic Health Foundation
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Indian Project Center
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Women's Law Center
Northeast Action
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
Out of Many, One
Pacific Business Group on Health
Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC)
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition (REHDC)
SEIU
Society for Women's Health Research
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc. (SHIRE)
The Applied Research Center
USAction

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

State and Local Organizations

California

California Immigrant Policy Center

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

California Partnership

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles

Korean Resource Center (KRC) (Los Angeles)

Colorado

Colorado Progressive Coalition

Connecticut

CT Citizen Action Group

Hawaii

FACE

Faith Action for Community Equity

Ke Ali'i Maka'ainana Hawaiian Civic Club

Papa Ola Lokahi

Idaho

Idaho Community Action Network

Illinois

Korean American Resource & Cultural Center (KRCC)

Maine

Maine People's Alliance

Missouri

GrassRoots Organizing of Missouri

Montana

Montanans for Health Care

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest

Nevada

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

New Hampshire

Granite State Organizing Project
New Hampshire Citizens Alliance

New York
Citizen Action of New York
Make the Road New York

Oregon
CAUSA
Oregon Action
Pineros Y Campesinos Unidos Del Noroeste

Rhode Island
Ocean State Action

South Carolina
South Carolina Fair Share

South Dakota
South Dakotans for Health Care Solutions

Vermont
Vermont Public Interest Research Group

Virginia
Tennants and Workers United (Alexandria, VA)
Virginia Organizing Project

Washington
One America
Para Los Ninos
Washington Community Action Network