

April 15, 2009

The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
Chairman  
Senate HELP Committee  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi  
Ranking Member  
Senate HELP Committee  
835 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy and Ranking Member Enzi:

As you and your colleagues continue to work on health reform, the over one hundred undersigned coalitions, groups, and organizations urge your support for addressing health inequities among underserved communities and populations, and ensuring the safety and quality of health services for all. We respectfully request a hearing to discuss opportunities within health reform to ameliorate and eliminate the grave disparities in health status and health services.

Striking disparities in health status exist among various communities and populations throughout the United States, which include shorter life expectancy, 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 health care, including care for chronic conditions such as mental health disorders and substance use, HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, oral health conditions, infant mortality and morbidity, respiratory disease, and end stage renal disease.

The undersigned organizations recognize that comprehensive health reform is essential to improving the safety and quality of health services, and will help to improve the health of everyone in our country. As the United States continues to struggle with how to improve health equity and ensure that all have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services, we urge you to seriously address this issue in health reform and convene a hearing.

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 Council  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDSmeds.com

America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry  
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Association Pastoral Counselors  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American Counseling Association  
American Diabetes Association  
American Heart Association  
American Hospital Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Social Health Association  
American Stroke Association  
Artists for a New South Africa (ANSA)  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)  
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now  
Association of Language Companies  
Association of Professional Chaplains  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Campaign for Mental Health Reform  
Center for Advancing Health  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
CommonHealth ACTION  
Community Health Councils  
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)  
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)  
External Partners Group for the CDC National Center on Birth Defects and  
Developmental Disabilities  
Families USA  
Gender Education & Advocacy, Inc.  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
Health Access California  
Health Care for America Now  
Healthcare Equality Project  
Hispanic Federation  
HIV Law Project  
HIVictorious, Inc

Human Rights Campaign  
Ivan Walks and Associates, LLC  
Khmer Health Advocates  
Latino Agenda for Healthcare Reform  
Latinos for National Health Insurance  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
Mental Health America  
National Alliance for Hispanic Health  
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Association of People With AIDS  
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)  
National Birth Defects Prevention Network  
National Coalition for LGBT Health  
National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of Urban Indian Health  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
National Foundation for Mental Health  
National Health Equity Coalition  
National Health Law Program (NHeLP)  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Indian Project Center  
National Latino Behavioral Health Association (NLBHA)  
National League for Nursing  
National PTA  
National Puerto Rican Coalition  
National REACH Coalition  
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable  
North Carolina Fair Share  
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations  
Out of Many, One Coalition  
Papa Ola Lokahi  
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition (REHDC)  
Satcher Health Leadership Institute at the Morehouse School of Medicine  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)  
Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)  
STOP AIDS Project  
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education (SHIRE)  
The AIDS Institute  
The Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital  
The Praxis Project

US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA)  
Virginia Organizing Project  
Washington Community Action Network  
West Virginia WV Citizen Action  
World Professional Association for Transgender Health

Joined by: Consumers Union

CC: President of the United States Barack Obama  
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 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