

September 10, 2007

Dear Senator:

We the undersigned represent a diverse group of health care providers, consumers and advocates dedicated to the health of children, seniors, and persons with disabilities. We are writing to encourage you to take advantage of an historic opportunity this year to help improve health care for children, seniors and people with disabilities as the Senate develops a conference report with the House of Representatives.

The House-passed Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007 (CHAMP Act) maintains current coverage and provides health coverage to millions of uninsured low-income children by reauthorizing and strengthening the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). It also strengthens Medicare by improving benefits, averting scheduled payment cuts to physicians, and enhancing payments to rural providers. The CHAMP Act also makes sound improvements in Medicare such as improved preventative benefits, mental health benefits, assistance for low-income beneficiaries, and consumer protections.

The CHAMP Act adopts the recommendations of the non-partisan Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) to phase-out higher payments to private Medicare Advantage plans. Doing so improves the financial health of Medicare and eliminates an inequity in the Medicare program in which some Medicare beneficiaries, regardless of need, receive additional benefits subsidized by taxpayers and other beneficiaries. The CHAMP Act maintains Medicare Advantage plans as a private alternative competing on a level playing field to provide choices to beneficiaries.

We applaud you for passing the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007. Providing for the continued success of this program, which has reduced by one-third the number of children who are without health care, is a very sound investment in our nation's future. We also strongly urge you to simultaneously support seniors and Americans with disabilities by including the Medicare provisions from the CHAMP Act in the CHIP reauthorization conference report. This will demonstrate to seniors and Americans with disabilities that both the Senate and the House of Representatives continue to be fully committed to helping children, seniors, and people with disabilities get the health care they need and deserve.

We look forward to working with you to pass this important legislation for the youngest generation and members of the greatest generation.

Sincerely yours,

ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now)

AFL-CIO

Alliance for Retired Americans

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Counseling Association

American Family Voices

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Mental Health Counselors Association  
American Public Health Association  
Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.  
Arizona Advocacy Network  
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Campaign for America's Future  
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.  
Child Welfare League of America  
Citizen Action/Illinois  
Citizen Action of New York  
Citizen Action of Wisconsin  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Colorado Progressive Coalition  
Connecticut Citizen Action Group  
Families USA  
Florida Consumer Action Network  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit  
Iowa Citizen Action Network  
International Union, United Auto Workers  
Maine Equal Justice Partners  
Maine People's Alliance  
Massachusetts Senior Action Council  
Medicare Advocacy Project, Greater Boston Legal Services, on behalf of its clients  
Medicare Rights Center  
Mental Health America  
Michigan Citizen Action  
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition  
MoveOn.org Political Action  
NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
NDPeople.org  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association of Social Workers, West Virginia Chapter  
National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs  
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Respite Coalition  
National Senior Citizens Law Center  
National Women's Law Center  
New Hampshire Citizens Alliance

New Jersey Citizen Action  
New Mexico PACE  
New Mexico Voices for Children  
Northwest Health Law Advocates (WA)  
OWL, The Voice of Midlife and Older Women  
Oregon Action  
Oregon Center for Public Policy  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Progressive Maryland

RESULTS

Rhode Island Health Center Association  
Rhode Island Ocean State Action  
Rhode Island State Nurses Association  
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA)  
Tennessee Citizen Action  
The Arc of the United States  
The Children's Partnership  
United Cerebral Palsy  
United Vision for Idaho  
Virginia Organizing Project  
Virginia Poverty Law Center  
Virginia Rural Health Association  
Voices for America's Children  
Voices for Virginia's Children  
WV Citizen Action Group  
Washington Community Action Network  
West Virginia Citizen Action Group  
Western Massachusetts Legal Services  
Wider Opportunities for Women