

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