COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW · Suite 312 · Washington, DC 20036 · 202.223.2532 · Fax 202.223.2538 · www.chn.org

November 5, 2009

Dear Representative:

The Coalition on Human Needs urges you to vote in favor of the Affordable Health Care for America Act, H.R. 3962. The Coalition is an alliance of more than 100 national organizations including service providers, faith groups, labor, civil rights, policy, and low-income advocacy organizations. CHN's 2009 Public Policy Priorities includes the organization's approved position in support of health care reform legislation. Written well before Congress drafted its legislation this year, it calls for reforms very similar to the provisions included in H.R. 3962. Here are the positions we took at the beginning of 2009:

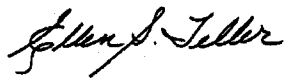
> The Coalition on Human Needs supports guaranteed affordable, high quality health care for every person. CHN supports reforms that build on and improve our current health care system, while assuring every person – adults and children - has access to care, via either a public program, employer-sponsored insurance, or a new group insurance pool. Coverage should be made affordable by offering sliding scale subsidies for low- and moderate-income families. Strong rules should hold insurance companies accountable to play fair, so families can receive coverage no matter where they live and whether or not they have a pre-existing medical condition. Medicaid eligibility should be strengthened and expanded so eligibility is based on need, rather than on family status. CHN supports policies that improve prevention and wellness, including support for mental health and substance abuse services, affordable prescription drugs, an improved Medicare program, and a strong public health system. CHN supports expanding, updating, and reauthorizing The Indian Health program to meet the special needs of its target population.
>
> The Coalition on Human Needs opposes efforts to restrict access to care or shift more of the costs of health care to those least able to afford it. CHN opposes restrictions on availability of coverage and care for immigrants, and unnecessary documentation requirements that create barriers to healthcare for citizens and immigrants.

H.R. 3962 does not realize these goals perfectly. While the bill provides coverage for an additional 37 million people, it does not achieve health care coverage for everyone. We hope that as the legislation moves forward there will be opportunities to make improvements that protect and expand access to coverage.

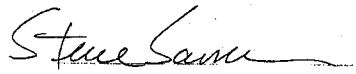
We believe that there are historic advances in the Affordable Health Care for America Act that deserve your yes vote. Medicaid coverage for people up to 150 percent of the poverty line is one such extremely important advance. The requirement that all but the smallest employers either provide coverage for their employees or contribute a meaningful sum to help pay for subsidies is a vital component of shared responsibility among government, employers and individuals. Increasing the overall health insurance coverage rate to 96% by 2019 will be an achievement of which you can be very proud. Ensuring that people with medical conditions can get coverage is an essential step. CHN strongly supports that the legislation is paid for by responsible savings and progressive revenue sources. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the package of revenues and savings included in this legislation will produce net savings which will continue in its second decade of implementation.

Every day we delay fixing our broken health care system brings unconscionably high costs – in needless sickness and death and in unsustainable economic burdens. You are fortunate in having this historic opportunity to take our nation to such an important step forward. The Coalition on Human Needs urges you to vote yes.

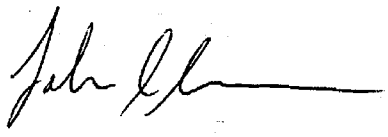
Sincerely yours,



Ellen S. Teller
Chair, CHN Board of Directors
Director of Government Relations
Food Research and Action Center

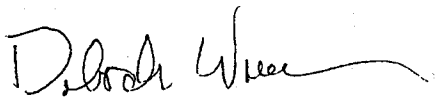


Steve Savner
Vice Chair, CHN Board of Directors
Director of Public Policy
Center for Community Change



John Irons
Treasurer, CHN Board of Directors
Research and Policy Director
Economic Policy Institute

Fran Bernstein
Secretary, CHN Board of Directors
Policy Analyst
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)



Deborah Weinstein
Executive Director
Coalition on Human Needs