



November 3, 2009 -- *Via e-mail*

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

Family Voices, a national organization of families with children and youth with special health care needs, commends you on the development of the *Affordable Health Care for America Act*. We believe that this legislation would make substantial improvements in the health care system for children and youth with special health care needs and their families.

We are extremely pleased with the bill's sorely needed reforms to the health insurance market, particularly the elimination of pre-existing condition exclusions, annual and lifetime benefit caps, and premium variations based on disabilities or chronic illnesses. We are also very pleased to see that the bill would establish caps on out-of-pocket expenditures to help prevent medical bankruptcy, a very real problem for families whose children have extensive health care needs.

In addition, we applaud the Medicaid expansions in the bill, which should enable more children to receive critical screening, diagnostic and treatment services to help to identify and ameliorate developmental or other health problems. We are also very pleased that the bill would provide temporary Medicaid eligibility to uninsured newborns, and would establish a pilot program to evaluate medical home models, including those for medically fragile children.

There are a number of other provisions in the bill that we applaud, including the significant investment in the nation's public health infrastructure for the benefit of all children and families.

We look forward to working with you as the bill moves through the legislative process to ensure that children do not lose any benefits to which they are currently entitled, and that insurance coverage is available and affordable for all families.

Sincerely,

Sophie Arao-Nguyen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable George Miller
The Honorable Charles Rangel
The Honorable Henry Waxman

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