

October 5, 2011

Dear Representative,

We write to urge you to co-sponsor **H.R. 2954 - the Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA) of 2011**, introduced on September 15, 2011 by Representative Barbara Lee along with Representative Donna Christensen and Representative Roybal-Allard. The Congressional Tri-Caucus (made up of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus) has long championed this bill and we support their efforts in the 112th Congress. We also want to thank you for your work and leadership on a host of issues important to the health and well-being of minority communities in the United States.

Last year, we celebrated the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the historic health reform law. Our communities stand to benefit from a number of the provisions of the law including immediate relief for many minority-owned small businesses through the small business health tax credit; improved access to health insurance for millions of individuals – particularly those with pre-existing conditions - through the insurance market reforms and the creation of new health insurance exchanges in 2014; the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) release of new draft standards for collecting and reporting on race, ethnicity, sex, primary language and disability status, as well as the Department's plans to begin collecting additional data on sexual orientation and gender identity; and Medicaid expansion.

In addition, the ACA put in place infrastructure to address disparities through the establishment of Offices of Minority Health in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Agency for Health Care Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). CMS has begun to pave the way to improving the quality and value of our health care system through the creation of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation and the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office.

The Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2011 recognizes that additional steps must be taken to specifically address health care disparities and provides additional tools necessary to address and eliminate health and health care disparities experienced by minority and underserved communities. The HEAA focuses on ensuring that a full range of culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and public health services are available and accessible in every community, creates additional pipeline and training opportunities for minority-serving professional and allied health care workers, and incorporates strategies to address a range of disease-specific, mental and behavioral health issues facing minority communities.

We also support the provisions in the HEAA that seek to further eliminate existing access barriers to affordable health insurance coverage, promote investments in innovative health care delivery methods and technologies, and advance research and data collection about the health needs and outcomes of our communities. These are all important steps towards eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities, and creating a sustainable health care system that can pave the road to health equity.

As organizations committed to reducing racial and ethnic health disparities, including the subpopulations within communities of color that face multiple barriers due to factors such as

immigration status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and limited English proficiency, we urge you to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation. The undersigned, many of whom have supported this legislation in the past, are ready to offer our expertise and networks to work with you to advance health equity. Please contact Priscilla Huang (phuang@apiahf.org) with any with any questions.

Sincerely,

AARP

Adelphi University

AIDS Action Baltimore

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America

AIDS United

Alameda County Perinatal Hepatitis B Program

Alameda County Public Health

Alameda Health Consortium

Alliance for a Just Society

Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Counseling Association

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

American Public Health Association

APICHA

ASIAC

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)

Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center

Asian American Health Coalition HOPE Clinic

Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian Center - Southeast Michigan

Asian Health Services

Asian Law Alliance

Asian Liver Center at Stanford University

Asian Pacific American Legal Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon

Asian Pacific Community in Action

Asian Pacific Liver Center

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)

Asian Services In Action - Ohio

AsianWeek Foundation

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Black Cardiologists

Association of Minority Health Professions Schools

B Free CEED Coalition

Black Women's Health Imperative

California Immigrant Policy Center
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership
California Primary Care Association
Caring Ambassadors Program
Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
CETPA, Inc.
CHOW Project
Coalition for Asian American Children & Families
Collaborative Center for Justice
Commission on the Public's Health System
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Community Catalyst
Community Legal Services, Inc.
Community Organizations in Action
Connecticut Legal Services
Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership
Council on Social Work Education
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Disability Policy Consortium
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Earth Mama Healing, Inc
Families USA
Family Equality Council
First Focus
Frederick County Hepatitis Clinic, Inc.
Gay & Lesbian Medical Association
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network
Great Beginnings for Black Babies, Inc.
Guam Communications Network
Harm Reduction Coalition
Health Law Advocates of Louisiana
HealthHIV
Healthy Kinder, Inc
Hep C Connection
Hepatitis B Foundation
Hepatitis B Free Campaign Alameda County
Hepatitis B Initiative of Washington, D.C.
Hepatitis C Association
Hepatitis Outreach Network (HONE)

Hmong National Development
Houston Korean Nurse Association
Human Rights Campaign
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Immunization Action Coalition
Institute for the Advancement of Multicultural & Minority Medicine
Interpreting for America/AFSCME
Interpreting for California/AFSCME
ISAAC (Immigrant Support And Assistance Center)
Japanese American Citizens League (JAACL)
Kalusugan Coalition, Inc.
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
Laotian American National Alliance, Inc. (LANA)
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Leeward Chuukese Immigrant Church
Legal Services for Seniors
LSA Family Health Service
Madera Coalition for Community Justice
Maryland Disability Law Center
Maryland Hepatitis Coalition
Men's Health Network
Mexican American Unity Council, Inc.
Midwest Asian Health Association (MAHA)
Missouri Hepatitis C Alliance
Movement is Life
MQVN Community Development Corporation
Nana's Wish
Nashville CARES
National AHEC Organization
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Health and The Aging
National Center for Health in Public Housing
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund

National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Task Force on Hepatitis B, Focus on AAPI
National Tongan American Society
National Urban League
National Women's Health Network
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Indian Council on Aging-Health Committee
New Mexico Voices for Children
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage
NICOS Chinese Health Coalition
North American Management
Northwest Health Law Advocates
OneAmerica
Out of Many, One
Pacific Islander Cancer Survivors Network (PICSN)
Pacific Islands Primary Care Association
PFLAG National (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
Prevention Institute
Project CHARGE
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Rockland Immigration Coalition
Samoan National Nurses Association
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco Hep B Free Campaign
Senior Moments
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Shifa Clinic, Sugar Land, TX
Sisters Together And Reaching, Inc. (STAR)
Society for Women's Health Research
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Status C Unknown

Stewards Of Prophetic, Hopeful, Intentional, Action (SOPHIA)
Stree level Health Project
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.
The AIDS Institute
The Bronx Health Link
The CHOW Project
The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
The Transgender Law Center
Total Health Care
Trust for America's Health
Utah Health Policy Project
Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA)
Vietnamese Student Association
Voices for America's Children
Volunteer Health Interpreters Organization
Western Center on Law & Poverty
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
YDI