

May 2, 2011

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the undersigned groups representing millions of consumers, patients, and workers, we are writing to express our opposition to H.R. 1213, legislation to repeal the mandatory funding being provided to States under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) to establish American Health Benefit Exchanges.

The creation of state-based American Health Benefit Exchanges is a central element of the ACA's provisions to make affordable, high-quality health insurance coverage available to American consumers. Exchanges will provide individuals and small businesses with competitive, consumer-centered marketplaces for purchasing private health insurance, giving them greater choice at a better price than they currently can receive on their own.

Exchanges are a bipartisan idea. Of the first three states (Massachusetts, Utah, and California) to enact laws establishing insurance exchanges, all three were signed into law by Republican governors. To date, a vast majority of states have indicated an interest in establishing their own exchange, as opposed to electing to have the federal government run an exchange for their residents. In addition, virtually every state has been granted funding under the ACA authority to begin planning or implementing exchanges.

The exchange planning and establishment grants that H.R. 1213 would repeal are vital resources that states need to successfully implement health insurance exchanges, provide access to affordable, good-quality health coverage, and make effective use of taxpayer dollars. Although exchanges will ultimately be self-sustaining, without this critical funding, states will not have the resources they need to undertake the many tasks necessary to get their exchanges up and running. As a result, millions of Americans will lose access to affordable, adequate health insurance coverage. We urge you to oppose this legislation and to focus instead on constructive efforts to build upon the ACA.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

Alliance for a Just Society
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Cancer Society-Cancer Action Network
American Diabetes Association
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
American Heart Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Brain Injury Association of America

Campaign for Community Change
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
CHADD – Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Children Now
Community Access National Network
Community Catalyst
Community Organizations in Action
Consumers Union
Direct Care Alliance
Easter Seals
Families USA
Health Care for America Now
Human Rights Campaign
International Union, United Auto Workers (UAW)
Japanese American Citizens League
Main Street Alliance
Mental Health America
NAACP
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network to this letter.
National Education Association
National Health Law Program
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Progressive States Action
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Service Employees International Union
The Arc of the United States
United Spinal Association
U.S. PIRG

State/Local Organizations:

Act for Women & Girls (California)
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Black Women for Wellness (California)
California Health Advocates
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
Cal-Islander Humanitarian Association (California)

Campaign for Community Change
Central Valley Partnership (California)
Children's Defense Fund – California
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Consumers for Affordable Health Care (Maine)
Great Beginnings for Black Babies (California)
Guam Communication Network (California)
Having Our Say Coalition (California)
Health Access California
Indian People's Action
Korean Community Center of the East Bay (California)
Madera Coalition (California)
Montana Organizing Project
Nana's Wish (California)
New York Immigration Coalition
North Carolina Fair Share
Oregon Action
Pacific Islander Cancer Survivor's Network (California)
Virginia Organizing
Washington Community Action Network

NAIC Consumer Representatives:

Stephanie Mohl
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Barb Rea
Susan H. Connors
Elizabeth Abbott
Kimberly Calder
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