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Oppose H.R. 2 and H. Res. 9

January 18, 2011

Dear Representative,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a diverse coalition of more than 200 national organizations charged with promoting and protecting the rights of all persons in the United States, we are writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 2 and H. Res. 9, which would repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA is vital to improving the health of our nation's most underserved communities—including low-income families, people of color, women, seniors, and people with disabilities. It is therefore critical that Congress ensure the law is properly implemented and its programs sufficiently funded.

Health care is a basic human right. Unfortunately, in the United States, many communities have worse access to care and worse health outcomes than the general population. For example, tuberculosis strikes Asian-Americans at 16 times higher rates; cancer kills 35 percent more African-Americans; and Hispanics are twice as likely to die from diabetes as the general public. Such statistics are simply intolerable.

A significant contributor to these health disparities is unequal access to health insurance and care. Although people of color represent one third of all Americans, they make up half of the uninsured population.¹ Seventeen million women in the U.S. have no health insurance,² including one in five women of reproductive age,³ and face significant financial barriers to accessing care. And millions of Americans with disabilities have no access to needed coverage. The ACA will expand potentially life-saving insurance coverage to 32 million people—including those segments of the population who have had the least access to care. The ACA also makes important investments in disease prevention, critical to reducing the high incidence rates of diabetes, HIV/AIDS, hypertension, obesity, and asthma experienced by people of color and other underserved populations.

The ACA recognizes that poor quality of care disproportionately affects certain communities. That is why the law prioritizes closing health disparity gaps. It requires the collection of key demographic data, to ensure that disparities can be identified and the right interventions

¹ "Health Reform and Communities of Color: Implications for racial and ethnic health disparities," Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, September 2010. Available at: <http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/8016-02.pdf>.

² "Women's Health Insurance Coverage," Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, October 2009. Available at <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/6000-08.pdf>.

³ "Census Data on Uninsured Women and Children," March of Dimes Foundation, September 2009. Available at http://www.marchofdimes.com/files/Uninsured_Highlights09.pdf.



can be made. It will also increase the diversity and improve the cultural competence of the health care workforce. These changes will improve care and increase access in many medically underserved communities.

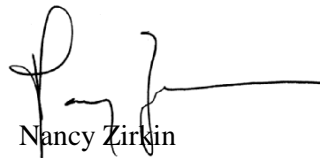
By addressing these huge disparities in both access to and quality of care, the ACA takes a momentous step toward ensuring that all Americans can benefit from affordable, high quality health care. We strongly urge you to oppose any efforts to repeal this landmark legislation and to protect the important progress that Congress has made toward creating a just and equitable health care system.

Should you require further information or have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Nancy Zirkin, Executive Vice President, at (202) 263-2880, or Corrine Yu, Leadership Conference Senior Counsel and Managing Policy Director, at (202) 466-5670.

Sincerely,



Wade Henderson
President & CEO



Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President