



# PA HEALTH ACCESS NETWORK

[www.pahealthaccess.org](http://www.pahealthaccess.org)

December 19, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama, President-elect  
Executive Office of the President  
451 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear President-elect Obama:

As you no doubt heard directly from voters during the election season, families across Pennsylvania are increasingly anxious about health care and are eager to see the new Administration and Congress keep their pledge to enact reforms that will ensure that every American has access to affordable and stable health insurance coverage and high-quality health care.

With rising premiums far out-pacing wages, everyone is feeling the effects. Family premiums for health coverage have increased 30 percent since 2001, while income has increased just three percent. Businesses that offer health insurance see it in their bottom lines, and family budgets are being strained by rising out-of-pocket costs. For the small businesses that can't offer coverage and individuals who do not have coverage, the possibilities of obtaining coverage grow ever dimmer.

The recent downturn in the economy has compounded these problems. Chief among people's economic worries are the health and well being of their families. They fear not being able to get the medications they need to stay healthy and take care of their loved ones.

Fixing the economy and reforming our health care system must be inextricably linked. Polling data collected prior to the election asked likely voters to rank policy ideas based on how effective they would be at improving the current economic situation, and the top two answers were reducing health care costs and providing health care to all Americans.

As we move into your new administration and the next Congress, our leaders must work together to find common-ground policies to provide coverage to all Americans.

We urge you to make comprehensive health reform your top domestic priority and the one you tackle first. Pennsylvania's children, businesses, seniors, people with disabilities and families are counting on your leadership.

Sincerely,

American Association of Retired Persons  
Richard Chevrefils, Pennsylvania State Director

AIDS Community Alliance of South Central Pennsylvania  
Philip K. Goropoulos, President and CEO

1500 North Second Street, Suite 11 • Harrisburg, PA 17102



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Childspace Cooperative Development, Inc. (Philadelphia)  
Janet Filante, Executive Director

Christian Churches United of the Tri-County Area  
Jacqueline Rucker, Executive Director

Community Action Association of Pennsylvania  
Darlene J. Bigler, President

Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley  
Alan L. Jennings, Executive Director

Community Action Southwest  
Darlene J. Bigler, Executive Director

Consumer Health Coalition (Pittsburgh)  
Jessica Seabury, Executive Director

Erie Health Access Network  
Roberta Rey Yetman, Coordinator

Family Health Council of Central Pennsylvania  
Cindy Stewart, President and CEO

Hispanic American Council (Erie)  
Joel C. Tuzynski, Executive Director

JEVS Human Services (Philadelphia)  
Jay Spector, President and CEO

Lori's Angels (Schuylkill County)  
Lori Michael, Owner

Maternity Care Coalition (Philadelphia)  
JoAnne Fischer, Executive Director

Montgomery County Community Action Development Commission  
Rick Beaton, President and CEO

National Multiple Sclerosis Society – Pennsylvania Collaborative Action Network  
Jennifer Strayer, Public Policy Manager

National Physicians Alliance  
Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Director

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Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute's Health Care for Health Care Workers Campaign  
Tracy Lawless, Pennsylvania Director

Partnership for a Healthy Community (Erie)  
Rev. Nettie V. Smith, Executive Director

PathWays PA  
Carol Goertzel, Executive Director

Penn Action  
Jeff Garis, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Association of Child Care Agencies  
Terry Casey, President and CEO

Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center  
Sharon Ward, Director

Pennsylvania Community Providers Association  
George Kimes, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living  
Barbara Orstein, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Direct Care Workers Association  
Brenda Nachtway, Co-Chair

Pennsylvania Head Start Association  
Blair Hyatt, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Homecare Association  
Vicki Hoak, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association  
Mary C. Kohut, Executive Director

Philadelphia Unemployment Project  
John Dodds, Executive Director

Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania  
Sari Stevens, Director of Public Affairs

SEIU Pennsylvania State Council  
Eileen Connelly, Executive Director  
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United Food and Commercial Workers – Local 1776  
Wendell W. Young IV, President

United Neighborhood Centers (Scranton)  
Michael J. Hanley, Executive Director

Warren County Health Access Network  
Karen Davis, Chair