



**AFFORDABLE
ACCESSIBLE
ACCOUNTABLE
HEALTH CARE
FOR ALL PEOPLE
LIVING IN
NEW MEXICO**

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December 19, 2008

Dear President-Elect Obama:

As you heard directly from voters during the election season, families across New Mexico 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, accessible and stable high-quality health care.

With rising premiums and ever-increasing out-of-pocket expenses far out-pacing wages, not to mention the specter of the growing unemployment problem, 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 for 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 take their child to the doctor or get the medications they need to stay healthy and take care of their loved ones.

Fixing the economy and reforming our health care system are 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 a new presidential administration and Congress, our leaders must work together to adopt policies to provide health care for all of us and to ensure a socioeconomic and physical environment that maintains the health of our communities.

We therefore urge President-elect Obama to make comprehensive health reform – including attention to public health, prevention and addressing the root causes of health problems - the top domestic priority in his administration and the one that he tackles first. New Mexico's children, businesses, seniors, people with disabilities and families are counting on his leadership for action.

Sincerely,

Health Action New Mexico
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness
Santa Fe Access Project
RESULTS – Santa Fe
New Mexico Conference of Churches
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Public Health Association