

PROJECT CHARGE

Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity

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PROJECT CHARGE STATEMENT ON PASSAGE OF THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (H.R. 3590)

Coalition of Asian American organizations applauds passage of historic health reform legislation

New York, NY – Project CHARGE (Coalition for Health Access to Reach Greater Equity) applauds President Obama, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and the House of Representatives for their incredible leadership to make health reform a reality. On March 23, 2010, President Barack Obama signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590), a historic health care reform legislation which will increase access to care for approximately 32 million Americans. Project CHARGE now looks to the Senate to make additional improvements to our nation's health care system by quickly passing the House-passed Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010 (H.R. 4872).

Asian Americans and Health Coverage

The legislation will greatly impact access to quality, affordable care for the Asian American community. Currently, there are 2.3 million uninsured Asian Americans nationally. The highest rates nationally are among Koreans (31%), Vietnamese (21%), and other South Asians (20%). In New York City, 1 in 8 Asian Americans has been uninsured in the past year. The overwhelming majority of uninsured Asian Americans in New York City are foreign born (83% or 65,000). While 65% of Asian Americans receive health care through their employers, the remaining 35% are self-employed, working in small businesses or in cash-based industries that are less likely to offer health benefits.

The passage of this legislation is a landmark moment that is 100 years in the making. It promises to bring numerous benefits to the residents of New York State. While it is a tremendous first step, we recognize that the legislation is not perfect. As a largely immigrant community, we are concerned that health care reform will still leave thousands out, such as undocumented immigrants who are being prevented from participating in this new system. We hope that such overhaul and improvements will come in the very near future. We look forward to continue working with policymakers to see this come to fruition.

Implications for Asian Americans

"This is a historic moment for all Americans including Asian Americans across the nation", said **Golam Mawla, CEO of MAAWS for Global, Inc.** "Now individuals and families can afford and access the quality of health care they need and deserve. Families no longer have to worry about being dropped from their coverage when they get sick or being having their children denied coverage for a pre-existing condition".

"For 39 years, the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center has been providing low income, underserved Asian Americans with access to primary health care and support services. Today, we join with 1200 community health centers across the United States and 20 million patients that we serve in celebrating the passage of the new health care reform legislation," said **Regina Lee, Chief Development Officer of the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center.** "The legislation will strengthen and expand the number of community health centers throughout the country, and help us deliver high quality, affordable care to all those in need. Community health centers stand ready to help make the vision of extending health care to 32 million Americans a reality."

Peter Gee, Resource Development and Program Manager of Asian Americans for Equality said, "We acknowledge that this legislation still leaves many uncovered, such as undocumented immigrants, and we look forward to working with our legislators to make health care accessible to everyone in the United States."

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“The Korean American community has one of the highest rates of uninsurance among all Asian American groups in the country,” said **Linda Lee, Associate Director of the Korean Community Service of Metropolitan New York, Inc.** “We are happy the affordability credits included in the health care reform bill will expand access to more low- and middle-income individuals, families, and small businesses to purchase health coverage through the new health care exchange. This is an important step to building a healthy, productive country together”.

“Like most Americans, Asian Americans feel the pain of our broken health care system and are struggling to keep up with out-of-control medical costs,” said **Noilyn Abesamis-Mendoza, Health Policy Manager of the Coalition for Asian American Children & Families.** “They also faced challenges with navigating our complex health system that often times is not responsive to their cultural and linguistic needs. While the new health care reform legislation is an important first step, there is still more work to do to ensure that individuals, families, and business understand the benefits and changes that come with health reform.”

“Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the country and will benefit tremendously by the recent passage of this comprehensive healthcare reform,” said **Fan Kong, Resource Development and Program Associate of Asian Americans for Equality.** “Asian Americans for Equality recognizes the importance of health care access to the well-being of all Americans and celebrates the passage of this historic legislation many years in the making.”

“We celebrate the passage of the new health care reform legislation that will expand access to millions, including many of the 78,000 uninsured Asian Americans in New York City. Additional work needs to be done however to provide truly inclusive access to everyone. Legal immigrants who qualify for Medicaid services are unfairly denied access to the program for five years even though they pay taxes like everyone else,” said **Suki Terada Ports, Executive Director of the Family Health Project.** “The nation needs to adopt an expanded policy, like the one in New York State where public insurance coverage is accessible to all lawfully residing immigrants who meet income eligibility regardless of their time in the U.S. We strongly recommend policymakers from states that offer more generous health programs and initiatives to continue the commitment to ensuring access to its residents and not to retrench from the promise of covering the uninsured.”

“We applaud the passage of the landmark health care legislation”, said **Rhodora Ursua, Board Member of the Kalusugan Coalition, Inc.** “Understanding that health goes beyond insurance coverage, we are excited to see prevention and wellness provisions are also included to support the delivery of evidence-based and community-based prevention services and program. Building a healthy nation by strengthening health promotion activities, reducing chronic diseases, and addressing health disparities is critical to our future”.

“The NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health is committed to reducing health disparities in the Asian American community through research, training and partnership”, said **Henrietta Ho-Asjoe, Administrator and Director of Community Development of the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health.** “We are excited to see that the health care bill includes strong data collection provisions that will help reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. Additionally, we are happy to see investments will be made to increasing, training, and supporting a diverse health work force”.

Project CHARGE is a New York City based collaborative of 14 organizations devoted to improving health care access for Asian Americans through capacity building and health policy advocacy.

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