



December 11, 2009

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and related organizations, I am writing to urge you to support an amendment to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide states with the option to give legal immigrant families equitable access to health insurance.

A longtime advocate of health reform, CHA and its members are committed to creating a health care system that ensures everyone will get the health care they need, when they need it. We believe that fundamental, comprehensive reform of the health care system is not merely a financial or political issue, but a moral imperative as well. Our faith tradition also calls us to support initiatives to provide access to care for the most vulnerable among us, including immigrants.

Amendment 2991 to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, offered by Sen. Robert Menendez and others, would help to address the current inequalities in our health care system by providing states the option to remove the current five-year waiting period for legally present immigrants to access Medicaid. CHA applauded Congress earlier this year for approving a similar effort to remove the five-year waiting period for legal immigrant children and pregnant women under the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act. As the Senate continues its efforts to expand vital health coverage to millions more, it is essential that others who have come to this country legally and support it through their labor and taxes not continue to be shut out from receiving similar benefits under Medicaid. True health care reform can and should contain this same fair standard for all legal immigrants, and your support for Amendment 2991 will ensure that it does.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and if anyone at CHA can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Rodgers'.

Michael Rodgers
Sr. Vice President, Advocacy and Public Policy