

March 14, 2007

Senator Hillary Clinton  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative John Dingell  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
United State House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

THE  
CATHOLIC HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION  
OF THE UNITED STATES



Dear Senator Clinton and Chairman Dingell,

The Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, is pleased to offer its support for the Children's Health First Act. Our Catholic health ministry has a long tradition of supporting affordable and accessible health care for all, particularly such vulnerable members of our society as children. We firmly believe that there is no excuse why any child in our nation should go without access to health care, a basic right that is critically important to the well-being and development of children. Existing coverage under Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has gone a long way toward ensuring that children have health coverage. But with nearly nine million children continuing to be uninsured, more action is needed.

The Children's Health First Act would provide states with additional resources and incentives to expand existing state coverage to children in families with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Additionally, this legislation would provide states with tools and resources to identify and enroll the six million children who currently qualify for health coverage, but are not enrolled. And, with more than half of all U.S. children covered under employer-sponsored insurance programs, the Children's Health First Act would provide incentives to shore up such coverage.

Even in the current fiscal situation, legislation such as this not only reflects the values of who we are as a nation but also provides an investment in our future. Extending coverage to all children while at the same time preserving full and adequate funding for programs such as Medicare and Medicaid is an important first step toward making the goal of health coverage for everyone a reality, and one which we think our nation is ready to embrace. We congratulate you, Chairman Dingell and Senator Clinton as well as all the cosponsors, for introducing the Children's Health First Act, and pledge our continued support to covering all the nation's children.

Sincerely,

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

Michael Rodgers, Sr. Vice President  
Public Policy & Advocacy

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