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July 25, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), a non-profit association representing 36,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States, we write to express our strong support for the *Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act, H.R. 3162*, which will allow the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Medicare, and Medicaid to expand enrollment of Hispanic children and elderly. Since one in five Hispanic children are currently uninsured and only 10 percent of Hispanics eligible for Medicare are enrolled¹, these programs are vital to increasing access to health care.

The mission of NHMA is to improve the health of Hispanics and other underserved populations. We support the SCHIP section that allows states to cover legal immigrant children and legal immigrant pregnant women, covers dental care and mental health care, provides state performance bonuses if they can demonstrate that they have enrolled new children who are currently eligible, but not enrolled, and creates the Children's Access, Payment and Equity Commission, that will examine issues of health disparities. We support the Medicare section that calls for reducing health disparities through demonstrations for language services reimbursement and targeted outreach, new quality data relating to disparities, expands the Low Income Subsidy and Medicare Savings Programs, and mandates a report on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards use by providers. We do not support total elimination of Medicare Advantage with a Hispanic enrollment of 21 percent² receiving comprehensive care management and with Puerto Rico covering dual eligibles. Finally, we support the Medicaid section that increases funds for transition to work, disabilities, family planning, adult day care and Puerto Rico.

In summary, the National Hispanic Medical Association supports the *Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act, H.R. 3162*, because it will increase access to health insurance for Hispanics and will, thus, improve the health of all Americans.

Sincerely,

Elena Rios, M.D., M.S.P.H.
President and CEO

¹ Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, 2003. CMS Data Tables

² Kaiser Family Foundation Analysis of 2003 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey Costs and Use File