



Congressional Black Caucus

OF THE 110TH UNITED STATES CONGRESS

2264 RAYBURN HOB • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515 •

TEL (202) 226-9776 • FAX (202) 225-5730

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

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Change Course, Confront Crises, Continue the Legacy

July 9, 2007

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell:

As we move closer to action on two signature health achievements in the 110th Congress – the reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and improvements made to the Medicare program – the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) is deeply committed to playing a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the Democratic Party on these two key health initiatives.

In that collaborative spirit, the CBC has reached consensus on several key priorities for the reauthorization of SCHIP. These priorities – which are listed in the attached document – reflect what the CBC not only believes, but *knows* must be included in the SCHIP reauthorization bill if the program is to adequately meet the needs of the 6 million children already enrolled and the 9 million children who are uninsured in this nation. In fact, when we developed these priorities, we did so cognizant of the critically important role that SCHIP has on the health, health care and well being of racial and ethnic minority children and families. While African-American and Hispanic children are disproportionately represented among the current SCHIP population, still 80 percent of all uninsured African American children and 70 percent of all uninsured Hispanic children are eligible for SCHIP, but are not currently enrolled. We can do better and as a Caucus of members who disproportionately represent the children and families most affected by SCHIP, we are committed to doing better.

With so much at stake for the health and wellness of millions of racial and ethnic minority children and their families, we feel compelled to do to ensure that the CBC priorities are appropriately addressed in the bill *prior* to its movement in the subcommittee or in the full committee.

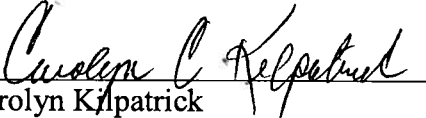
Towards this end, we have asked Majority Whip, Congressman Clyburn, to convene a Member-only meeting between the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Chairmen of the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees, and the Chairmen of the Health Subcommittees of each committee before the end of this week.



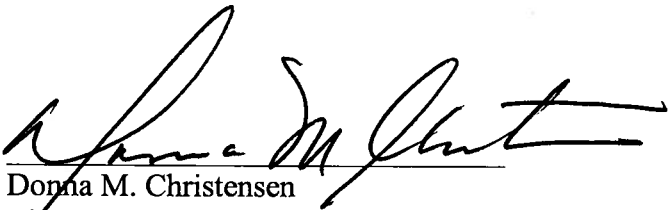
This meeting is important because it has come to our direct attention that bill text has been drafted and shared with numerous individuals on and off the Hill, yet the CBC has not been afforded the same opportunity to review the text. Therefore, we expect to review draft language during this requested meeting and engage in a sincere and earnest discussion about the Caucus' priorities for the SCHIP reauthorization.

We fully appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working closely with you to ensure that the Congressional Black Caucus continues to play an integral role in the Democratic legislative victories that we anticipate in the remainder of the session.

With warm regards,



Carolyn K. Patrick
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus



Donna M. Christensen
Chair, Health Braintrust
Congressional Black Caucus



Congressional Black Caucus

of the Congress of the United States
1510 Longworth House Office Building— Washington, DC 20515
Ph- (202) 225-1790 — Fx- (202) 225-5517

Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Health Braintrust Priorities for the Reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program

- **Inclusion of provisions that ensure that eligibility caps are set such all low-income, uninsured children are enrolled into the program.**
- **Inclusion of provisions to ensure cultural and linguistic competence across all health and health care services and treatments covered by the program.**
- **Inclusion of an expanded, core, mandatory set and scope of health care services and treatments that include the following:**
 - **EPSDT screenings.**
 - **Inclusion of comprehensive dental and oral health care services and treatments, with adequate reimbursement to dentists and oral health specialists.**
 - **Inclusion of provisions that work to reduce the rising prevalence in overweight and obesity among children in a culturally and linguistically appropriate and sensitive manner.**
 - **Inclusion of mental health provisions that include reliable access to adequate and appropriate mental health screening, care and treatment services for children that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and sensitive.**
- **Coverage for low-income pregnant women.**
- **Presumptive eligibility when enrolling individuals already enrolled in WIC, Food Stamps and other FPL-based social programs.**
- **A suspension of the funding limitations that affect the payments made to the U.S. territories, as well as an increase in the federal medical assistance percentage that does not exceed the highest Federal medical assistance percentage applicable to the 50 States.**
- **Extension of SCHIP eligibility period to at least 12 continuous months.**