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March 14, 2007

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
476 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 2-510

The Honorable John Dingell
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Clinton and Representative Dingell:

The American Academy of Pediatrics has long been at the forefront in advocating for quality health coverage for all children and adolescents. In this light, we believe that your introduction of the "Children's Health First Act" is a bold initiative in the right direction and we are supportive of its intent. The fact that there are over nine million uninsured children in this country is an outrage and the very title of this bill clearly states what our national priorities should be.

Many of the components of this bill are consistent with our own principles and we are especially pleased that you have included a Medicaid Advisory Commission to advise Congress on the various financial barriers to coverage that currently exist. All health plans should have payment rates that assure that children receive all recommended and needed health services. As we have discussed, we are fast approaching the point where it will be difficult, if not impossible, for pediatric providers to continue to make available the broad array of services critical to the health and well-being of children. We are heartened by your commitment to explore options with us in this regard.

We look forward to working closely with you to realize our shared goal of quality, health care coverage for all our nation's children.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay E. Berkelhamer".

Jay E. Berkelhamer, MD, FAAP
President

