

July 25, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of Congress:

On behalf of Families USA, the national voice of health care consumers, we applaud both committees of jurisdiction on the introduction of the CHAMP Act (Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act). This legislation builds upon the success of the SCHIP program and will ensure that more children get access to quality, affordable health insurance. It also provides significant help for low-income seniors and people with disabilities who rely on Medicare for their health coverage. Together, these pieces are an important step towards ensuring high quality affordable health care for the youngest generation of Americans.

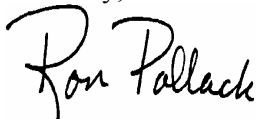
Reauthorizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program is one of the most important tasks before Congress this year. Since SCHIP's creation in 1997, the number of uninsured children has been reduced by a third. This year, six million children have healthcare because of SCHIP. The CHAMP Act would increase SCHIP's funding level by committing an additional \$50 billion over five years to reauthorize and improve SCHIP. Fully funding the program is essential for states to reach more of the six million uninsured children eligible for Medicaid and SCHIP.

The CHAMP Act couples a significant funding increase with important tools and incentives to encourage states to reach out and enroll the millions of eligible but unenrolled children. The bill would improve access to dental care and mental health care for children and gives states new ways to help get children enrolled, and help keep them enrolled as long as they are eligible. Moreover, the bill gives states the option to extend coverage to legal immigrant children and pregnant women who are now unfairly prohibited from participating. These changes strengthen the safety net SCHIP and Medicaid provide for children.

The CHAMP Act simplifies and expands existing programs that help low-income Medicare beneficiaries pay for their Medicare premiums and prescription drugs. It raises the asset limit for these programs, which will allow beneficiaries to protect their modest savings and still receive help with their health care costs. Improvements to outreach should also significantly increase enrollment in these programs, thus delivering vital assistance to those who need it the most.

Your proposal shows a strong commitment to ensuring high quality, affordable health care for our nation's most vulnerable populations: children, seniors and people with disabilities. We thank you for your strong commitment to children's health coverage and look forward to working with you to pass this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Ronald F. Pollack  
Executive Director

