

MEMORANDUM

June 26, 2009

To: AAP Chapter Presidents
AAP Chapter Vice Presidents
AAP Chapter Executive Directors

Fr: Erin Howard, Assistant Director of Public Affairs and Member Advocacy

Cc: AAP Executive Committee
Dr. Olson Huff
Dr. Molly Droge
Dr. Jay Berkelhamer
Jackie Noyes
Bob Hall, JD, MPAff
Claire Bornstein
Jim Pawelski
Dan Walter

Re: Federal Health Care Reform Update

Federal Advocacy Action Steps:

The Time is Now! With health care reform in full swing now is the time to act on behalf of our nation's children. Congress will be in recess until July 7. The recess provides you with an opportunity to speak with your members of Congress while they are home in your state and urge them to provide children with the services they need and deserve in any health reform proposal.

Please contact your representatives' offices as soon as possible to schedule a local meeting with your member or their staff. Additionally, we encourage your chapter members to participate in local town hall meetings and rallies that your representative or senator is attending. As you know, many members of Congress will hold events to hear from their constituents. With health care a reform a priority for President Obama and Congress, many of the events could include presentations and/or Q&A sessions on health care reform.

We have included all the information you should need for your advocacy activities with your federal representatives. Attached please find a set of **talking points** that we encourage you to use in your meetings. The **background document** provides additional information on what is included in the talking points. And the **draft sign-on letter** is another way to share your thoughts and priorities with your member of Congress. The letter is meant to serve as a draft only, and we urge you to modify the letter to include

information specific to your state. As always, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We would be more than happy to send additional information.

Federal Update:

Activity on health care reform continued this week with the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) and Finance Committees and three Committees in the House: Energy and Commerce, Education and Labor, and Ways and Means Committees.

On Friday, June 19, the House of Representatives released their 852 page draft health care reform legislation. The "tri-committee" bill (the three House committees listed above collaborated on the legislation) includes many provisions that could help children and pediatricians. Some of the provisions include:

- Increase of payments to Medicaid primary care providers to 100% of Medicare within 3 years fully funded by the federal government.
- "First dollar" coverage (i.e. no cost sharing or copays) for preventive services including well baby and well child care and oral, health, vision, and hearing services, equipment, and supplies for children under 21 years of age.
- A "public plan" option to promote choice and competition in the insurance market.
- Access to Medicaid for individuals below 133% federal poverty level (FPL) and new subsidies for those from 133-400% FPL to purchase coverage.
- State maintenance of effort in perpetuity for those on Medicaid now.
- Elimination of pre-existing conditions limitations.
- Medical Home pilot program in Medicaid funded at more than \$1 billion.
- Financial assistance through federal grants and loan forgiveness for the pediatric workforce.

Beginning Tuesday the House Energy and Commerce, Education and Labor and Ways and Means Committees convened hearings to discuss and debate the legislation. On Wednesday Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, appeared before the Energy and Commerce Committee. Many of the questions, especially those from Republicans, focused on the costs estimates of the legislation and the public plan option. Additionally on Wednesday House Republicans outlined their health care bill. According to reports this week the outline draws from previous legislative proposals with provisions to address medical malpractice lawsuits, expansion of health savings accounts and transparency.

The HELP Committee adjourned its second week of debate yesterday and plans to reconvene following the Fourth of July recess. Senators from the Finance Committee also took a break from negotiations on a bipartisan bill on Thursday, vowing to continue working on a deal. While the Committee has yet to reach a compromise, Chairman Baucus said the legislation would cost less than \$1 trillion over ten years, provide coverage for most Americans and be fully paid for. Thursday afternoon, Chairman

Baucus, Ranking Member Grassley (R-IA), and Senators Conrad (D-ND) and Enzi (R-WY) issued a joint statement on the bill:

"As we have been for the last several weeks, we are committed to continuing our work toward a bipartisan bill that will lower costs and ensure quality, affordable care for every American."

The Finance Committee is expected to release a detailed proposal, but an exact timeline is still unclear.