

December 18, 2008

President-Elect Barack Obama
Executive Office of the President
451 6th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001



Dear President-Elect Obama:

Families across Texas are increasingly anxious about health care and are eager to see the new Administration and Congress keep their pledge to enact reforms that will ensure that every American has access to affordable and stable health insurance coverage and high-quality health care.

With rising premiums far out-pacing wages, everyone is feeling the effects. Family premiums for health coverage have increased 30 percent since 2001, while income has increased just three percent. Businesses that offer health insurance see it in their bottom lines, and family budgets are being strained by rising out-of-pocket costs. For the small businesses that can't offer coverage and individuals who do not have coverage, the possibilities of obtaining coverage grow ever dimmer.

The recent downturn in the economy has compounded these problems. Chief among people's economic worries are the health and well being of their families. They fear not being able to take their child to the doctor or get the medications they need to stay healthy and take care of their loved ones.

Fixing the economy and reforming our health care system must be inextricably linked. Polling data collected prior to the election asked Americans to rank policy ideas based on how effective they would be at improving the current economic situation, and the top two answers were reducing health care costs and providing health care to all Americans. Moreover, in Texas, as in other states, the health care sector is vital to job creation and growth. The industry employs some 900,000 Texans, or about 10 percent of the total workforce.

As we move into a new presidential administration and Congress, our leaders must work together to find common-ground policies to provide coverage to all Americans.

We therefore, urge President-elect Obama to make comprehensive health reform a top domestic priority in his administration and one of the first that he tackles. Texas' children, businesses, seniors, people with disabilities and families are counting on action and his leadership.

Thank you for your commitment to health care for America's children and families.

Sincerely,

Advocacy Incorporated
Any Baby Can
Baptist Health Foundation
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Brighton School
Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth, Inc.
Catholic Health Association of Texas

Center for Public Policy Priorities
Children At Risk
Children's Defense Fund - Texas
Children's Hospital Association of Texas (CHAT)
Christian Life Commission, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Community First Health Plans
Covenant Health System
Crosspoint, Inc.
Daughters of Charity Services
DePelchin Children's Center
Healy Murphy Center
insure•a•kid
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
League of Women Voters Austin, Texas
League of Women Voters Richardson, Texas
League of Women Voters Tarrant County, Texas
League of Women Voters Texas
Methodist Healthcare Ministries
Migrant Health Promotion
National Council of Jewish Women Texas State Public Affairs
National Multiple Sclerosis Society - Texas Chapters
SAMMinistries
San Antonio Food Bank
San Antonio Nonprofit Council
Seton Family of Hospitals
Southwest Mental Health Center
Spina Bifida Texas
Tarrant Area Food Bank
Tarrant County CHIP Coalition
Teaching Hospitals of Texas
TEAMability
Texans Care For Children
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Texas American Federation of Teachers (Texas AFT)
Texas Association of Community Health Centers
Texas Hospital Association
Texas Medical Association
Texas Pediatric Society
The ARC of San Antonio
The Health Collaborative
United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County
United Ways of Texas
Voices for Children
YWCA of Metropolitan Dallas