

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S House of Representatives
H-232 the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charlie Rangel
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Dingell
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives,

On behalf of the nearly 24 million Americans with diabetes and the 57 million more with pre-diabetes, we thank you for your tireless commitment to reforming our nation's health system. The American Diabetes Association strongly supports H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act.

We are pleased that this landmark legislation will make health care more accessible to the millions of Americans who are currently uninsured and underinsured, including those with diabetes who have been denied coverage due to their pre-existing condition. Key provisions included in H.R. 3962, such as prohibiting pre-existing condition exclusions, eliminating annual and lifetime caps on benefits, ending discriminatory rating practices based on health status, prohibiting age ratings over two to one, allowing for dependent coverage up to age 27, and mandating guaranteed issue of insurance, are long overdue improvements to our broken health care system.

H.R. 3962 establishes a Health Benefits Advisory Committee to recommend required benefits. We thank the leadership and committees for recognizing that an expert third-party will be most qualified to determine a package of essential minimum benefits. We are pleased that the Committee will examine the health coverage laws and benefits of each state in developing recommendations. Including public input will also go a long way to enhance this process. At the same time, we are grateful for language that sets up important categories of essential benefits, including required coverage of durable medical equipment, which will provide test strips, blood glucose meters and other important equipment for individuals with diabetes.

We are happy to see the inclusion of affordability credits for premiums and cost sharing for individuals and families with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level as well as caps on out-of-pocket costs for individuals and families. We are also happy to see the expansion of Medicaid eligibility, giving more people access to needed health care coverage. When people with diabetes are unable to afford necessary care, they go without the treatment needed to prevent or slow the devastating and costly complications of diabetes.

National Office
1701 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
Tel: 703-549-1500

Diabetes Information
call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
online www.diabetes.org
The Association gratefully accepts gifts through your will.

The Mission of the American
Diabetes Association is to prevent and
cure diabetes and to improve the lives
of all people affected by diabetes.

We are pleased to see the elimination of cost-sharing for Medicare covered preventive services, including diabetes screening, Diabetes Self Management Education (DSME), and Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) for certain individuals.

Additionally, this legislation recognizes that in order to truly reform the health of our country we must do more than just improve the health insurance industry. H.R. 3962 will advance the quality of health care, invest in important prevention and wellness programs, and work towards eliminating health disparities. We are pleased that your legislation creates a Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund to support prevention and wellness activities. At the same time, it creates a national wellness and prevention strategy and provides investments in our public health infrastructure. We greatly appreciate that your bill gives employers the tools they need to help their employees lead healthier lives by creating a grant program to implement effective workplace wellness programs. A focus on prevention is an essential tenet of this legislation that allows us not only to ensure that Americans have access to health coverage when they get sick, but to improve our system in a way that helps people live healthier lifestyles and prevent chronic diseases like diabetes.

Diabetes disproportionately affects members of minority communities. Over seven percent of the general population has diabetes, but for minority populations prevalence is much higher. Over ten percent of Latinos, 14 percent of African Americans and 16 percent of American Indian/Alaska Natives have diabetes. This legislation includes important data collection provisions that will allow us to better address and work to eliminate these health disparities. Also, we support language that invests in our health workforce, providing training for primary care physicians, nurses and public health professionals. Enhancing our public health workforce will also help address the diabetes epidemic in underserved communities.

Again, we thank you for your commitment to repairing America's health system. As this health reform legislation moves forward, we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that people with diabetes, those at risk for diabetes, and all Americans have access to not only meaningful, affordable health care but also to the tools necessary to building a more healthy society. Should you have further questions, please contact Tekisha Dwan Everette, Director, Federal Government Affairs at teverette@diabetes.org or (703) 253-4375.

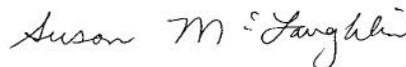
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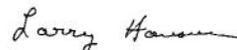
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