



Seattle Indian Health Board

*A Multi-Service Community Health Center for Medical Dental, Mental Health,
Substance Abuse, and Community Education.*

November 6, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
U. S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman,

On behalf of the Seattle Indian Health Board, one of 34 urban Indian health organizations that contract with the Indian Health Service I am writing to ask for your support of H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act. Specifically, I am asking that you support the inclusion of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) as part of H.R. 3962. The addition of the IHCIA in H.R. 3962 honors the trust responsibility incumbent upon the United States to provide health care to Indian people regardless of where they reside.

The IHCIA includes desperately needed modernizations and updates to the Indian health delivery system. By including IHCIA in the national health reform bill Congress will ensure that American Indians and Alaska Natives are able to maximize the benefits of the national health care reform effort.

In addition to modernizing the Indian health care system, providing greater coverage to Americans, and reducing cost, the issue of health care reform is an important component of our economic recovery. Those of us struggling to assure health coverage for our employees and their families are no longer able to sustain double digit increases in our insurance premiums. This burden of excessive health insurance costs has a direct economic effect on agencies like the Seattle Indian Health board.

We have been seeking reauthorized of the IHCIA for more than 10 years. Adding this legislation to H.R. 3962 is our best hope to finally achieve this important step in the advancement of health improvements for Indian people...

Thank you for your consideration and support of H.R. 3962.

Sincerely,



Ralph Forquera, M.P.H.
Executive Director