

MEMORANDUM

July 10, 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 Board of Directors
Dr. Olson Huff
Dr. Molly Droge
Dr. Jay Berkelhamer
Jackie Noyes
Bob Hall, JD, MPAff
Claire Bornstein
Jim Pawelski
Dan Walter
Ian Van Dinther

Re: Federal Health Care Reform Update

FEDERAL UPDATE

We hope you all had a fun Fourth of July holiday. During the congressional recess, you almost certainly heard that members of Congress continue to working on health care reform. While some members and the press have reported that health care reform has hit some speed bumps, President Obama and Congress state they are committed to passing comprehensive reform by the end of this year.

Now that Congress is back in session we are expecting at least four remaining weeks of hearings and debate leading up to the August recess (tentatively scheduled for July 31st in the House of Representatives and August 7th in the Senate). Both the House and Senate still plan to vote on legislation before they leave for the summer vacation. Despite initial reports that the Senate would take the lead this summer, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House leadership indicated they could pass a bill on the floor of the House first. The Energy and Commerce Committee (one of the three Committees working on health reform legislation) hopes to release a final draft of the legislation next week. House leaders are working with moderate and conservative members of the Democratic caucus to assuage concerns over its cost and garner support for the legislation. The full House is tentatively scheduled to debate health reform legislation the week of July 27th.

The timeline in the Senate is less clear. On Friday, July 3rd the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee released a revised version of their bill. The new

version provides more information on how the HELP Committee proposes to improve coverage and affordability, including information on the “Gateway” exchange structure. The Academy was pleased to see a significant investment in a Medicaid medical home demonstration project, and a requirement of first dollar for all Bright Futures services in future private insurance. Additionally the updated bill does not include the proposed benefits commission that could have limited medically necessary services for children. Even though the HELP Committee isn’t responsible for Medicaid and Medicaid reforms (the Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over Medicaid), Medicaid was a point of contention in this week’s debate. As a result, we expect Medicaid to be central to the debate over cost and benefits in the Committees and on the Senate floor.

The Senate Finance Committee continues to meet behind closed doors to craft a bipartisan compromise. Senator Max Baucus (MT), Chair of the Finance Committee, and Senator Charles Grassley (IA), Ranking Member of the Committee, would like to convene a mark up as soon as possible, but negotiations are proceeding slowly. On Wednesday, Majority Leader Reid met with the four Republicans from the Finance Committee participating in the negotiations (Senators Grassley, Snowe (ME), Hatch (UT) and Enzi (WY)) to bolster their mutual pledge to producing a bipartisan bill. The group discussed four major concerns: the cost of legislation, whether to tax health care benefits, whether a public option should be available to the uninsured and whether employers should be forced to provide insurance. While all those involved agreed that the meeting was “positive,” there is still a lot of work to be done.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We must continue to act on behalf of our nation’s children. Even though your members are working hard in Washington, they need to hear from you. Over the next weeks members of Congress and advocates in DC will be working to hammer out legislation and as a result we need to regularly reaffirm the importance of providing children with the services they need and deserve in health reform.

Action Steps:

- 1) **Call your member of Congress.** Please use the attached talking points and emphasize the importance of providing all children with access to age-appropriate care in a medical home. (These talking points were sent in a previous chapter update.)
- 2) **Sign and send the attached sign on letter to your members of Congress.** Please feel free to modify the letter to include your experiences treating children. Only you can speak to the consequences of uninsurance, underinsurance and inappropriate care for children.
- 3) **Call you local district offices to schedule a meeting during the August recess.** Even though the recess is still a month away, schedules fill up quickly.
- 4) **Forward this memo to fellow AAP members!** We need everyone’s help to pass health reform that benefits children!

Become a Key Contact! Unlike regular FAAN emails, Key Contacts receive regular, more specific emails from the Department of Federal Affairs, keeping them informed about the latest developments and ways to get involved.

Key Contacts are AAP members who have agreed to take their advocacy to the next level. By becoming a Key Contact, you will receive important assignments and can provide critical information to AAP based on your results. In the coming months, we will be calling on Key Contacts with specific requests to make an impact on the health care reform debate. Being a Key Contact requires a very small time commitment but can yield big results! [Join today!](#)

Learn more about the issues in health care reform! Log on to the [AAP Members Center Federal Advocacy Page](#) to get the latest background information and tools you need to make a difference!

- AAP Health Care Reform backgrounder
- AAP Access Principles
- AAP Priorities on Health Care Reform (Payment, Equity, Workforce, and more)
- Talking Points
- Chapter sign-on letter
- Specific Senate and House legislation and official AAP responses
- Kaiser Family Foundation side-by-side of the Senate and House legislation