



NAPAWF Statement on the House Vote on Health Reform

Sunday, March 21, 2010

Today the House of Representatives took the critical step of passing the bill that paves the way for passage of sweeping health insurance reforms that are going to help millions of people in the U.S. Thank you for taking action to help us get this far.

Is the bill perfect? No, but it's a step in the right direction to covering more people, ending some of the most unfair and abusive insurance practices and expanding vital safety net programs. Once signed into law, over 30 million currently uninsured people will have health insurance. Insurance companies will be banned from gender rating and from denying individuals coverage for having pre-existing conditions. Medicaid and CHIP, vital programs for low-income individuals, are extended. The bill includes strong mandates for collecting data on race, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, language, socioeconomic status, and disability status, which will improve health outcomes for API women and girls.

We are disappointed in the treatment of immigrants and abortion access in the final bill. The bill failed to lift the five-year bar on access to Medicaid for lawfully present immigrants, and excludes undocumented immigrants from participating in the new health insurance exchanges using their own money. The bill also includes the problematic Nelson amendment, which unfairly singles out abortion by requiring participants in the health exchanges who want abortion coverage to make two separate payments: one for the premium, and one for the abortion coverage.