

July 27, 2009

Dear Member of the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition:

On behalf of the millions of members represented by our unions we strongly urge you to move forward and pass the America's Affordable Health Choices Act, H.R. 3200, without delay before the House of Representatives recesses. Despite the significant resources our nation invests in the health care system, it fails to routinely deliver affordable quality care. Comprehensive health care reform is an urgent economic and moral imperative. Maintaining the status quo is unacceptable. Working families cannot afford to wait any longer.

While many of our members are fortunate enough to have health insurance through their employer because of collective bargaining, they often do not get the quality care they need and deserve. Premiums have been rising four times faster on average than workers' earnings since 1999. Even people with insurance are forgoing needed medications and doctor visits, due to their inability to pay co-payments and deductibles. The skyrocketing costs of coverage are putting the health and economic security of working families at risk.

The America's Affordable Health Choices Act will help restrain the growth in costs imposed on hardworking families from insurance companies, the pharmaceutical industry and providers. The bill builds on our employer-based system to achieve the goal of affordable coverage with comprehensive benefits that cover the health services that families need. Importantly, the bill rejects taxing health care benefits, which would make coverage more expensive, destabilize our current system and drive many employers to stop providing health benefits for their workers. In addition, by establishing a public health insurance plan the legislation will inject much needed competition into the system which will expand affordable options, particularly in rural communities, and prompt innovations in the delivery of health care to infuse quality into the system. The bill offers the healing promise of modern medicine to millions of Americans who do not have health coverage or have inadequate coverage.

Congress is at a critical juncture in health care reform. The path that leads to delay and inaction on H.R. 3200 is unacceptable. We urge you to press forward and swiftly pass the America's Affordable Health Choices Act.

Amalgamated Transit Union
American Federation of Government Employees
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
Air Line Pilots Association
Communications Workers of America
Department of Professional Employees

International Brotherhood of Boilermakers
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers
of America (UAW)
National Education Association
Service Employees International Union
Transport Workers Union of America
United Mine Workers of America
United Steelworkers of America