

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2009

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New Report Shows Senate Health Care Bill Will Expand Coverage for Nearly 1.8 Million New Yorkers

Report Also Highlights How Many New York Residents Would Lose Coverage if the Comprehensive Health Reform Fails to Pass

New York, NY—Although the ongoing Senate debate over health care reform may seem at times to be unrelated to everyday life in New York, passage or failure of health reform will have a profound impact on the health and well-being of many New York residents. A new report being co-released today by Families USA a national organization for health care consumers and the Health Care for All New York Campaign, a coalition of nearly 90 groups in New York State, found that 1,765,000 people in New York would gain coverage by 2019 under the Senate health reform bill.

The Families USA report, based on Congressional Budget Office data, also shows that, without health reform, 455,000 people in New York will lose health care coverage by 2019. In 2007 and 2008, the average number of uninsured in New York was 2,620,000, but the total will rise to 3,075,000 if reforms do not pass. Nationally, the number of uninsured will reach 54 million in 2019 in the absence of comprehensive health insurance reform.

“This report shows that from a coverage perspective, the Senate bill, while imperfect, would cover nearly 2 million uninsured New Yorkers——this is the fourth largest gain amongst the States in the nation,” said Elisabeth Benjamin, Vice President of Health Initiatives at the Community Service Society of New York and a coordinator of the Health Care for All New York (HCFANY) Campaign, “Conversely, if Congress fails to act, we will be one of the top four states to lose out: This report is a wake-up call for the Senate to pass its bill so the reform process can move forward.”

“While these coverage gains are important, HCFANY believes that both Congressional proposals could be strengthened in ways that would support New York, especially in the areas of: providing fair Medicaid reimbursements; treating immigrants equally, guaranteeing better affordability protections for consumers in the state exchanges and supporting New York’s strong insurance laws,” said Mark Hannay, Director of Metro New York Health Care For All Campaign, a member group of HCFANY. For more specific information on how the Senate bill and H.R. 3962 will affect New York, see www.hcfany.org

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“The consequences of inaction are very severe for people in New York and across the country,” said Ron Pollack, Executive Director of Families USA. “If the Senate fails to act, Americans will continue to struggle and a growing number of them will face the devastating effects of going without coverage.”

Each and every state stands to gain from the passage of health reform. Enacting comprehensive reform will not only extend coverage to millions of Americans, but it will also help bolster the economy, increase the stability and security of coverage, and moderate the rise of health insurance premiums.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act would cover millions of people by doing the following:

- **Ensuring Access For All:** The Senate bill requires insurers to offer coverage to every person who applies, regardless of health status, age, or gender.
- **Making Premiums Affordable:** The Senate bill helps millions of middle-class families who simply cannot afford health coverage by creating a new health insurance marketplace where they will be able to purchase quality coverage, regardless of gender or health status. In addition, the bill will make premium subsidies available to families with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level (\$88,200 in annual income for a family of four in 2009).
- **Strengthening Medicaid and SCHIP:** Currently, in 42 states, adults without dependent children are not eligible for Medicaid at all—even if they are penniless. The Senate bill will make all individuals who have incomes below 133 percent of poverty (about \$29,330 for a family of four in 2009) eligible for Medicaid regardless of whether they have dependent children or not or have met a stringent test for disability, substantially increasing the number of very low-income people with health coverage. It also maintains the state children’s health insurance program. This program is known as Child Health Plus in New York State and covers nearly 400,000 children.

“The Senate has an opportunity to provide peace of mind to uninsured New Yorkers by providing and extending health coverage to them. Conversely, if they fail to act we will continue to see record increases in uninsured people, accompanied by mounting medical bankruptcies. We hope the Senate rises to this unprecedented opportunity and passes the health insurance reform bill,” said Heidi Siegfried, Director of Health Policy for New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage, a member group of HCFANY.

A copy of the Families report, “At a Crossroads: Is health Coverage Ahead for America?” is available on the Web at: <http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/health-reform/at-a-crossroads>