



National Association of
Community Health Centers, Inc.

August 7, 2006

The Honorable Pete Stark
239 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Stark:

On behalf of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), I am writing to express our support for the AmeriCare Health Care Act of 2006. We share your goal of providing simple, affordable, and reliable health insurance to all residents of the U.S. and its territories.

Health centers are integral in providing high-quality, cost-effective preventive and primary health care to individuals in medically underserved communities, regardless of their ability to pay. As the medical home to more than 6 million uninsured patients, health centers understand the importance of insurance in accessing health care services.

The AmeriCare Health Care Act of 2006 takes crucial steps to providing affordable health care to all individuals, including many low-income individuals who cannot afford coverage today. NACHC appreciates the additional benefits to low-income individuals that will help them access affordable insurance coverage, including subsidized cost-sharing and the elimination of deductibles for inpatient hospital services and preventive services. With 71% of health center patients having family incomes at or below the federal poverty level, NACHC strongly supports this bill's provisions to help these individuals gain health insurance.

Americans need health insurance that responds to their health care needs. AmeriCare includes preventive care and other crucial services, including mental health, substance abuse treatment, and a prescription drug benefit. By offering this benefit package with no annual or lifetime limits on coverage, the AmeriCare Health Care Act of 2006 ensures that all Americans will have continuous access to the care they need to remain healthy.

Thank you for your leadership in addressing the lack of insurance coverage in this country. Health centers stand ready to assist you in your efforts to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,

Daniel R. Hawkins, Jr.
Vice President for Federal, State, and Public Affairs