

March 28, 2007

The Honorable Pete Stark
Chairman, Health Subcommittee
Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
239 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stark:

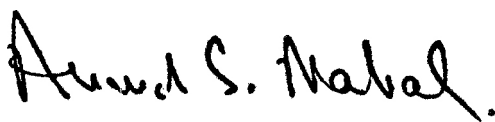
On behalf of the California Medical Association, I am writing to applaud the introduction of your AmeriCare plan to expand health coverage to the millions of uninsured Americans. We sincerely appreciate your efforts to address this urgent problem. Physicians in California are extremely concerned about the growing numbers of uninsured and their ability to find doctors to care for them.

As you are well aware, California has more than 6 million uninsured – more than any other state in the nation. As a result, our health care delivery systems are fragmented and seriously underfunded. Emergency Rooms—which have become the only source of care for the uninsured—are in crisis. Many have closed. Two-thirds of California's uninsured are low-income working families that cannot afford health insurance. Moreover, employers are increasingly dropping coverage in California. We must build a system that provides basic affordable coverage and physician access for the millions of uninsured. To that end, we also urge you to reauthorize the SCHIP-Healthy Families Program this year. As you know, that program has brought health care services to millions of uninsured children in California.

While we may differ on some aspects of your AmeriCare plan, the CMA fully supports health reform proposals that involve an individual mandate. We also agree with your multifaceted approach that encourages the continuation of employer-sponsored coverage – still a major source of insurance coverage in this country – and government involvement, particularly for low-income working families.

The CMA is committed to work with you to bring about universal health coverage in our lifetimes! Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of the uninsured. We look forward to working with you on this important legislation.

Sincerely,



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