

May 10, 2004

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
House of Representatives  
2328 Rayburn  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Dingell:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations dedicated to improving women's health, we write to express our support for the FamilyCare Act of 2004. We thank you for sponsoring this vital piece of legislation which we believe represents a critical step towards providing coverage to uninsured parents, particularly women, and their families.

Through expansions of Medicaid and SCHIP, the FamilyCare Act directly addresses the problem of health care access that so many Americans face. Even with the existence of these important safety net programs, there are 44 million Americans without health insurance. Women, in particular, have increasing concerns about securing access to essential health services. Currently, over 17 percent of adult females are uninsured, with this number growing each year. When women lack health insurance, their access to basic services, including preventive and prenatal care, is severely limited.

This bill demonstrates a significant commitment to addressing these issues. First, the FamilyCare Act would help uninsured women access essential health care services by guaranteeing a comprehensive benefits package that includes family planning services. Second, the provisions of the bill that extend the Medicaid and SCHIP programs to underserved populations, namely legal immigrants and pregnant women, serve to bring otherwise unreachable populations into the safety net. Third, this legislation provides new options for outreach, presumptive eligibility and streamlined enrollment that will allow women and their families to gain quicker access to the health care they need.

We thank you for introducing this legislation as we believe it represents an important step towards closing the gap in health coverage for the uninsured and will serve to provide health insurance for hard-working parents and their children. The enactment of the "FamilyCare Act" is vital to improving women's health and making the issue of the uninsured a national priority.

Sincerely,

The Alan Guttmacher Institute  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Public Health Association  
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Center for Reproductive Rights  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Defense Fund

Church Women United  
Community Healthcare Network  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
FamiliesUSA  
Family Violence Prevention Fund  
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America  
HIV Medicine Association  
Institute for Reproductive Health Access  
International Union, UAW  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, Inc.  
National Abortion Federation  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Service Employees International Union  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women's Health & Family Planning Association of Texas