



May 13, 2004

The Honorable John Dingell
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of the American Nurses Association (ANA) I am writing to express support for the FamilyCare Act of 2004 (H.R. 4350). ANA applauds the introduction of this bill, which will make real progress in covering the nation's uninsured. ANA is the only full-service association representing the nation's registered nurses (RNs). Through our 54 constituent member associations, we represent RNs of all educational preparation in all practice settings. As the voice for professional nursing services, ANA is critically concerned about the number of Americans without health insurance.

Nurses provide health care to this nation's most vulnerable. Nurses are daily witnesses to the consequences of living without health insurance: delayed treatment, sicker patients, worse outcomes. It is a national disgrace that there are nearly 44 million Americans living without health insurance coverage, including 8.5 million children. Today, one in six Americans has no health insurance. Over 70 percent of the uninsured live in a family with at least one full time worker. As alarming as they are, these statistics would be much worse without the insurance safety net provided by Medicaid and SCHIP.

However, this fragile safety net is being stretched beyond its limit. Recent studies have shown that budget constraints have forced states to remove as many as 1.6 million low-income people from these insurance programs. Nearly half of those losing insurance coverage are children.

The FamilyCare Act of 2004 is needed to shore up these critical programs. It invests \$50 billion in coverage for parents of children enrolled in Medicaid and SCHIP, and encourages states to cover more eligible children. It also makes it easier for working families to maintain coverage, and helps ensure that pregnant women receive the prenatal services that they need.

Certainly, access to basic health services is the least that we owe our children and working families. The FamilyCare Act will help make this basic right a reality. All of America will benefit from the resulting improvement in our national health status.

Sincerely,

Rose Gonzalez, MPS, RN
Director, Government Affairs