

La Fe Policy Research and Education Center



*Promoviendo Bienestar para Familias y Comunidad con Conocimiento, Confianza y Poder
Promoting Family and Community Well-being through Knowledge, Trust and Empowerment*

March 19, 2009

The Honorable Patrick Rose, House Human Services Committee
P.O. Box 2910, Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78768

RE: SUPPORTING CHIP/
Medicaid House Bills: 584, 647,
676, 743, 745, 787, 862, 1080,
1200, 1329, 1541, 1699, 1769,
1903, 1938, 2199, 2200, 2204,
2206, 2376, 2388, 2962

Dear Chairman Rose,

As you are well aware, Texas along with the rest of the nation is amidst an economic and health care crisis. It has become critical that Texas find a balance of conducting the State's bi-annual business while addressing the policy needs of Texas, such as the uninsured crisis as well as developing good policies that will sustain Texans through this difficult time.

The vital resources from both American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIRA) offer Texas an opportunity to set the stage for transforming access to health care. SCHIP is a means to address growing health insurance disparities that plague the Latino community and a large majority of Texans. The social determinates of Texans, particularly among Latinos, require Texas policy-makers to be innovative in addressing affordability, accessibility and health disparities in their health care reform strategies.

For those reasons **we urge you to support** policies that:

- **Expand access through the Medicaid/SCHIP Buy-in** programs given that Latinos are most likely to have limited access or no access to ESI. Approximately 6 in 10 families live between 200-300% Federal Poverty Level.
- **Improve continuity of care** by moving Medicaid re-enrollment from 6 month to 12 months similar to SCHIP.
- **Eliminate barriers and obstacles** in Medicaid by streamlining the eligibility system to include more staff, inter-agency information exchanges and new technology. By these efforts, Texas will have access to incentive funding from federal funds to provide more access to eligible children.
- **Optimize available resources in CHIPRA** to provide coverage to more children in Texas.

La Fe Policy Research and Education Center (*La Fe PREC*) is an organization that engages in efforts to create systematic changes to social and health policy through *policy analysis, education, leadership, and advocacy*. La Fe PREC is committed to key legislative priorities that address:

Health Disparities - Latinos carry an undo burden with greater challenges to accessing health care. The health disparities in Latino families are intensified by the inequality in access to quality health care. Therefore, the socio-economic, health disparities and environmental circumstances of uninsured Latinos must be considered to develop and implement effective policy solutions.

Affordability - Latino families and children are most likely to live in poverty, be from working families who most likely work in small business and more likely to be uninsured.

Accessibility is vital to healthy outcomes and addressing the health care challenges of Texas Latinos who are most likely to be uninsured and reside in medical and health professions underserved health care areas.

We look forward to a partnership that will improve the *bienestar* (*well-being*) of our community and Texas as a whole. Latino population growth and economic contributions combined with improved health care access will further ensure our State's prosperity. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me, or Ms. Amy Casso, Policy Analyst.

Juan H. Flores

Juan H. Flores
Executive Director