



**For Immediate Release**  
**October 11, 2007, 10a.m. PST**

Contacts:  
Sarah Olivia Mercer, (916) 205-0860 (Sacramento & San Francisco)  
Nayamin Martinez, Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena  
Oaxaquena, (559) 499-1178 (Fresno)  
Mari Lopez, California Partnership, (213) 256-9649

## **Stop Playing Politics, Real People Need Real Health Care** *One Thousand Signatures Supporting Health care Reform Delivered to Governor Schwarzenegger*

California – Armed with more than one thousand signatures of Californians supporting health care reform, a multi-ethnic coalition delivered a petition to Governor Schwarzenegger’s statewide and regional offices today, including Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego. The message was simple: Get health care reform done now and get it done right! The organizations delivering the petition in Los Angeles included California Pan Ethnic Health Network, California Immigrant Policy Center, Latino Issues Forum, the California Partnership, California Black Health Network and California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation who are all part of a multi-ethnic coalition, called Having Our Say, working to ensure that communities of color are represented in the health care reform debates.

“We have a true opportunity right now to ensure that EVERY Californian has the opportunity to be healthy and live a healthy life,” stated Ellen Wu, co-founder of Having our Say and Executive Director of the California Pan Ethnic Health Network. “Health care reform is critical -- to protect people who have coverage and to expand coverage to those who do not. Millions of Californians are without insurance, especially among communities of color, and that is unacceptable.”

The year’s health care reform debate brings a glimmer of hope to many who have suffered physically, emotionally, and financially from being uninsured. “Every year my siblings and I talk about dropping out of school to help pay for my parents’ health insurance,” stated Caroline Lee, a resident of Los Angeles. “My mother is a cancer survivor and my father has prostate cancer. Their health insurance premiums are so expensive yet they need regular care. My father is often in so much pain that he only sleeps 2 hours a night. Access to health care for my family is truly a matter of life and death.”

Throughout the year the Having Our Say coalition has been participating in the effort to reform California’s health care system. In July, the coalition analyzed the impact of the three main health care reform proposals Assembly Bill 8, Senate Bill 840, and the Governor’s January proposal on communities of color, which are most likely to be uninsured. Having Our Say published a report based on this analysis showing that **7 out of 10 of the newly insured would be from the African American, Asian American, Latino and Native American communities**. The study also revealed that health reform would result in a significant increase in access to coverage among limited English proficient communities and low-income Californians.

“Californians can no longer wait for health care – they are saying this loud and clear – evidence of this is thousand supporters that signed this petition in just two weeks,” stated Mari Lopez, California Partnership Health Policy Specialist. “The Having Our Say coalition has been working diligently with key stakeholders and policymakers. We have developed policy recommendations we feel strengthen the proposals as well. We are running out of time and tired of the excuses.”

**Note to assignment editors: Local community members are available to share their experiences** about being uninsured in English, Spanish and Korean. **Please contact Sarah Mercer at 916-205-0860** for more information.