

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA **NOW!**

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Key California Congressional Leaders of Communities of Color Sign On to Campaign for Health Reform in 2009

*Over 85 Congressional Members, including Sen. Obama, and
including California Reps. Baca, Honda, Lee and Solis
Current/Future Chairs of Asian, Black, and Hispanic Congressional Caucuses
Commit To Guarantee of Quality, Affordable Health Care For All*

*Community and Health Groups Applaud Leadership, Spotlight How
Communities of Color Have the Most at Stake,
Need to be at the Forefront of the Federal Fight*

LOS ANGELES AND OAKLAND, CA – At events in both Northern and Southern California, health and community groups applauded the new announcement that key California Congressional leaders support health reform as a goal in 2009 and have signed the [Health Care for America Now](#) statement, declaring that they are on the side of quality, affordable health care for *all* and opposed to leaving Americans on their own with unregulated health insurance.

At Asian Health Services in Oakland, and the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, health advocates and experts spotlighted the urgent need for health reform throughout California's diverse communities, as evidenced by the leadership of our Representatives, who chair the major Congressional caucuses that represent communities of color, including:

- Congressman Joe Baca (D-San Bernardino), Chair, Congressional Hispanic Caucus
- Congressman Michael Honda (D-Campbell), Chair, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus
- Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-Oakland), potential future chair, Congressional Black Caucus
- Congresswoman Hilda Solis (D-Los Angeles), Chair, Congressional Tri-Caucus

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These Congressional members are supporting health reform as a top priority in 2009 and supporting key principles that any reform should follow. Responding to growing disparities in rates for chronic diseases, clinical outcomes, and health care coverage, their early leadership shows the urgency that health reform has in California's communities of color. The "Which Side Are You On?" statement is available online here: (pdf)

http://hcfan.3cdn.net/517370ec1fddf45044_vbm6ivw3d.pdf

"Our current health care system is failing our diverse communities," said Ellen Wu, executive director of the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network. "With communities of color making up more than 70% of California's uninsured, we need our leaders to fight for health care options that place our collective well-being ahead of profits for the insurance industry"

"Health Care for America Now's goal this year is to get the next President and a majority of Congress committed to the principles of quality, affordable health care for all and opposed to policies that would tax our benefits at work and leave us on our own with the unregulated, bureaucratic private insurance industry," said Anthony Wright, executive director, Health Access California. "With the commitments of these legislators, we are taking a major step towards making comprehensive health care reform a priority in 2009."

Speakers at the events included Mari Lopez of the California Partnership; Reshma Shamasunder of the California Immigrant Policy Center; Dong Suh, Associate Director, Asian Health Services; Laura Perez, Executive Director, Street Level Health Project; East Oakland; Dr. Robert Cooper, MD, Executive Director & Medical Services Director of the West Oakland Health Center; Ellen Wu, Executive Director, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network; Anthony Wright of Health Access California; and others.

Since mid-August, more than 85 members of Congress, including Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), have committed to the HCAN principles of quality, affordable health care and rejected the course of taxing health benefits and pushing people on their own into a deregulated private health insurance market. The HCAN statement asks members of Congress to choose between two very different prescriptions for health care reform with specific, contrasting policies.

On July 8th, 2008, the [HCAN campaign launched](#) in Washington, DC and 52 cities (with 38 state capitals) across the country. Over the past few months, supporters in 40 states have been holding grassroots actions to expose the bad practices of an industry that makes money by putting profits over people's health. HCAN's ongoing outreach involves asking individuals, organizations, and members of Congress, "Which Side Are You On?" – the side of quality, affordable health care for all, or the side of leaving us alone to fend for ourselves in the unregulated insurance market.

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[Health Care for America Now](#) is a national grassroots campaign bringing together millions of individuals and more than [325 organizations](#) with the clear goal (read HCAN's [Statement of Common Purpose](#)) of winning comprehensive health care reform in 2009. The broad-based coalition is made up of community-based organizations, unions, women's groups, doctors, nurses, patient advocates, small businesses, faith-based groups, think tanks, and leading netroots activists.

***Health Access California** (www.health-access.org) is the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition, working for the goal of quality, affordable health care for all, and is the lead partner organization in California for the Health Care for America Now campaign.*

***Health Care for America Now** and **Health Access California** are both section 501(c)(4) issue advocacy organizations, HCAN and each of its members conducts and funds only activities appropriate to its tax and election law status. This statement was not funded or endorsed by HCAN's 501(c)(3) members.*

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