

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Ethnic Health Organizations Applaud the Start of New Health Reform Benefits**

*Six Month Anniversary of Reform Law Brings Free Preventive Care, Bars Health Plans from Dropping Coverage to the Sick, and Provides New Coverage for Young Adults*

**OAKLAND** – Six months ago, U.S. President Barack Obama made history by signing the landmark health reform law that will lead to expanded health coverage for the majority of California’s 8 million uninsured, especially for communities of color who comprise nearly three-quarters of our state’s uninsured. Today, several provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) take effect with significant health benefits. Multicultural health organizations are celebrating this milestone.

**The provisions that take effect September 23, 2010 include:**

- Young adults up to age 26 can remain on their parents’ health insurance plans.
- New health plans must provide free preventive care.
- Insurers must cover any child with a pre-existing condition.
- Insurers can no longer drop coverage when members get sick.
- Health plans cannot place lifetime limits on how much they will have to pay for care.

“We applaud the President and members of Congress for making health care reform a reality,” said Ellen Wu, Executive Director of the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN). “Free preventive care, limiting abusive practices by the health insurance industry, and keeping young adults on their parents coverage until age 26 will all contribute to better health for communities of color,” said Wu.

“Providing coverage for more preventive screenings is critical to keeping our families and communities healthy, because Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have among the lowest rates of screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers,” said Kathy Lim Ko, president and CEO of the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum. “We must also ensure that our communities receive information about preventive screenings in languages they can understand, and that we all have access to care that is culturally appropriate.”

Under the new prevention regulations, health plans must provide free preventive care and members will no longer be charged for annual check-ups, immunizations, or screenings which will encourage people to get tested early. “Early detection can save lives,” said Calvin Freeman, Acting Executive

Director of the California Black Health Network. National statistics show that African American women have higher mortality rates for breast cancer than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States.<sup>i</sup> “Free preventive care will make it much easier to detect diseases like cancer earlier, giving our communities a fighting chance to stay healthy.”

Additionally, the new regulations will prohibit insurers from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions and allow parents to keep their children on their health plans until age 26. “These two provisions will provide important relief to parents of sick kids and young adults about to enter the workforce,” said Al Hernandez Santana, Executive Director of the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California. “We have a responsibility to help Latino families who are struggling to make ends meet. This law will provide assurance and piece of mind for our families,” he added.

“Under the law, health insurers can no longer drop coverage for someone just because they get sick,” added James Allen Crouch, Executive Director of the California Rural Indian Health Board (CRIHB). “Native Americans and Alaskan Natives are twice as likely to have diabetes than Caucasians. We also have a high prevalence for asthma, high blood pressure, and heart disease,” noted Crouch. “This new provision ensures health plans provide the coverage that we have paid for,” said Crouch.

The [Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum \(APIAHF\)](#) influences policy, mobilizes communities, and strengthens programs and organizations to improve the health of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

The [California Black Health Network \(CBHN\)](#) works to improve the health of African Americans in California.

The [California Pan-Ethnic Health Network \(CPEHN\)](#) works to eliminate health disparities by advocating for public policies and sufficient resources to address the health needs of communities of color.

The [California Rural Indian Health Board \(CRIHB\), Inc.](#) is devoted to the needs and interests of the Indians of Rural California.

The [Latino Coalition for a Healthy California \(LCHC\)](#) is a statewide Latino health policy and advocacy organization committed to initiating and advancing policies that will increase access to health services and build healthy Latino communities in California.

**For more information:**

[Fact sheets in multiple languages](#) that examine how national reform efforts will impact California's diverse communities can be found at [www.cpehn.org](http://www.cpehn.org).

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<sup>i</sup> National Cancer Institute. “A Snapshot of Breast Cancer,” September 2009. See: <http://www.cancer.gov/aboutnci/servingpeople/snapshots/breast.pdf>