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To: Beth + Marie From: Helene

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President

Fax: 617-6215 Pages: pages including cover

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Dear Health Care for America Now Colleagues:

It is time to create an American solution to our health care system, one that guarantees quality, affordable health care for everyone in our country. We must create a system that gives security to our families and is affordable to individuals, employers and government. All of us have a shared responsibility to realize this goal. I applaud the efforts of Health Care for America Now in helping to direct the voices of millions and millions in America to advance health care reform in the nation's Capitol.

The HCAN Statement of Common Purpose calls for reform that is rooted in and built on our current health care system, but one that guarantees quality, affordable health care for everyone in America: A choice of a private insurance plan, including keeping the insurance you have if you like it, or a public insurance plan; government testing and enforcing rules so coverage will actually be there when you need it; assistance with purchasing coverage based upon a family's ability to pay; and support to small businesses to help them insure their workers.

Over the past year, two distinct paths have emerged for addressing the failings in our health care system, the "you are on your own" approach and a different approach that guarantees quality, affordable health care for all in America. I support this second path - as does HCAN - in which we achieve a comprehensive solution in which all of us - individuals, employers, and government - share responsibility for guaranteeing health care we can count on.

The "on your own" approach leaves too many out, taxes the health care benefits of those with employer-provided coverage, and discourages employers from providing health benefits for workers, leaving more and more people on their own with the insurance companies. Further, this approach actually favors removing rules from the insurance industry rather than establishing the government as a true advocate of individuals and families, stopping insurers from turning people away, raising rates or dropping coverage based on a person's health history, or wrongly denying or delaying care.

In contrast, the HCAN principles embody an approach that actually delivers a solution of guaranteed quality, affordable health care for all in America. Under this approach, everyone gets a choice of health insurance plans, including the right to keep your current insurance, choose another private plan or to join a

public health insurance plan. Benefits are defined, with a choice of providers, that meets our families' health care needs - from preventive care to care for serious illness. And, we must make the extra effort to ensure equity in health care access, treatment, and research. We must strengthen health services in low-income communities. Predictability and affordability is key for working families, retirees, small businesses, and other employers. And finally, we must control costs by advancing quality with measures such as: lowering administrative expenses, investing in preventive care, actively managing disease, setting standards for performance, reducing medical errors, and using the public's purchasing power to lower drug and other prices.

Again, I support the HICAN Statement of Common Purpose, and I oppose the "on your own" approaches to health care reform that go against these principles. And, I salute the efforts of the broad grassroots coalition represented by Health Care for America Now to advance this most critical of issues.

Sincerely,

