



National Organization for Women

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October 16, 2009

Honorable Member
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

The National Organization for Women stands with the 18 percent of all women in the United States who have no health insurance and with the countless insured women who have been denied critical medical services and those who have been charged more than men for insurance, with fewer benefits. NOW is committed to ending the status quo, where at least one-third of non-elderly persons are uninsured or under-insured and 44,000 persons die each year for lack of health insurance. NOW is committed to ending a system that puts profits ahead of patients.

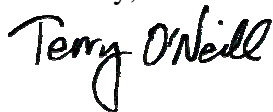
The U.S. health care system has disastrous consequences for uninsured women. Millions of women are forgoing necessary health care, even critical care, due to costs. Uninsured women are three times less likely to have had a Pap test in the last three years, with a 60 percent greater risk of late stage cervical cancer. Breast cancer is 30 to 50 percent more fatal in uninsured women. Pregnancy-related maternal deaths are three to four times higher among women who receive no prenatal care, and going without prenatal care increases infant death rates by six times.

NOW has endorsed single-payer health care as the most affordable and cost-effective way to provide universal coverage. NOW will support a health care reform package with a strong public insurance option, administered by the government, with these minimum requirements:

1. acceptance of anyone not enrolled in Medicare, irrespective of age or pre-existing conditions
2. employers must have the option of insuring their workers through the public insurance option
3. the federal government would have authority to negotiate prices and reimbursements for health care goods and services
4. comprehensive coverage, including: hospital care, preventative services, mental health, substance abuse treatment, maternal health, ALL reproductive services, prescriptions, vision, dental, long term and home care, nursing home care, hospice services and rehabilitation services
5. portable access to qualified health care practitioners of beneficiary's choice
6. no out-of-pocket costs for preventative services (no co-payment, co-insurance or deductible)
7. income-qualified public subsidies would supplement an affordable income-based sliding-scale based on the regional self-sufficiency standard

We will be closely monitoring progress of the Senate on health care reform and urge you to vote for including a strong public health insurance plan.

Sincerely,



Terry O'Neill, President