

## **Student Assembly**



## **APHA Student Assembly September 2007 Action Alerts**

### **TAKE ACTION NOW!**

*The following are a few issues that need your attention! Please log on to [www.capwiz.com/apha/home](http://www.capwiz.com/apha/home)*

*For more information and learn how YOU can take action now!  
In just a few minutes you can send an email to your representatives, print out a letter to mail, access information to formulate a letter to your editor, or get ideas on issues that your community needs to know about!*

*You can make a difference!*

***Now that Congress is back in session, we have lots of work to do!***

#### **Reauthorize the SCHIP program Before September 30!**

The House and Senate both passed legislation to reauthorize the State's Children Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) in August. The House bill would provide an additional \$47 billion in funding for the SCHIP program over 5 years, while the Senate bill would provide \$35 billion over the same period. Both use an increase in the federal tobacco tax to pay for at least a portion of costs associated with the bill. The Senate fully funds the SCHIP program through a 61 cent increase in the tobacco tax, while the House uses a 45 cent increase in the tobacco tax and changes in Medicare physician payments and by phasing out overpayments to private plans that provide Medicare services.

#### **Eliminate Health Disparities (S. 1576, H.R. 3333, H.R. 3014)**

Both the Senate and the House have introduced bills that take a comprehensive approach at eliminating health disparities and share several important commonalities. This legislation would improve cultural competency among health care providers and increase diversity in the health professions workforce. It would bolster research, community grants for outreach, education, and implementation of effective and sustainable health disparity reduction programs. Additionally, these bills would strengthen the national commitment to minority health improvement within the Department of Health and Human Services. Roughly one third of the population is made up of racial and ethnic minorities, but they disproportionately account for 52 percent of the uninsured and suffer a greater burden of illness and death. Let congress know that you support legislation to improve the health and health care of underserved minorities.

#### **Strengthen Federal Public Health Program**

Urge Members of Congress to pass a strong Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Bill! Investments in our nation's public health infrastructure are vitally important.

Continued low funding levels for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and other public health programs will hamper the ability to respond to public health emergency such as natural disaster or influenza pandemic and will also continue to stress our already overworked and understaffed public health workforce in their daily work.

**Access to Emergency Medical Services Act 2007 (H.R. 882)**

H.R.882 would improve access to emergency medical services and the quality of care furnished in emergency departments of hospitals by establishing a bipartisan commission to examine factors that affect delivery of such services, providing for additional payments for certain physician services furnished in such emergency departments, and requiring reports on certain emergency department information as a condition of participation in the Medicare program.

**Health Farm Bill**

This year's Farm Bill reauthorization provides a significant opportunity to improve the nutritional quality of all Americans' diets. APHA has identified a number of priorities for inclusion in the 2007 Farm Bill. These priorities include strengthening the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, the availability of fruits and vegetables in schools, improving the nutritional quality of school foods, expanding human nutrition research at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and ensuring that WIC food packages will be updated in the future to reflect advances in nutrition science.

**Support the Prevention First Act (S. 21, H.R. 819)**

The United States still has one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases of any industrialized country. Each year almost half of all pregnancies are unintended and nearly half of these unintended pregnancies end in abortion. The Prevention First Act is a landmark bill that will expand access to family planning services, guarantee comprehensive medically accurate sex education, ensure that private health plans offer the same level of coverage for contraception as they do for other prescription drugs and services, and promote emergency contraception, especially for sexual assault survivors. Through these critical measures, we can significantly reduce the rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and reduce the need for abortion among women of all ages. Let Congress know that you support increasing access to family planning services, improving women's health, reducing the rate of unintended pregnancy, and reducing the number of abortions – all while saving scarce public health dollars – Support the Prevention First Act!!

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact Mariza Luna or Denise Burke at [action@aphastudents.org](mailto:action@aphastudents.org)