



November 18, 2008

Senator Max Baucus
Senate Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baucus,

I am writing to thank you for your leadership in drafting and releasing your "Call to Action" white paper on comprehensive health care reform. You have articulated not only a powerful, forward-thinking vision, but also practical, achievable policy actions to ensure that all people in America have access to affordable, quality health care.

At the National Partnership, we believe that health care is central to the well-being of women and families. It is a key determinant of their quality of life, their economic security, and their ability to thrive, prosper, and participate in our society. Indeed, ensuring that all individuals have access to quality health care will be a key determinant of our nation's vitality. Real health reform has taken on even greater urgency in recent weeks as millions of families face extraordinary economic upheaval and distress.

Unfortunately, as your Call to Action recognizes, current health care quality is unacceptable, costs are unsustainable, and the lack of coverage is inconsistent with basic American values. Cost, quality, and coverage are inextricably linked, and must be tackled together in any health reform effort.

Your white paper embraces that reality by laying out three equally important tasks: (1) policies to ensure meaningful coverage and care to all Americans, (2) insistence that any coverage expansion be accompanied by high quality, higher value care, and (3) a commitment to long term financial sustainability. We strongly believe this three-pronged strategy is the most effective way to achieve comprehensive, meaningful health reform, and commend you for your thoughtful leadership.

Your Call to Action provides a highly promising roadmap for Congress and the President to enact health reform early in the 111th Congress. We hope you will quickly work to turn this roadmap into legislative action, and look forward to continuing to work with you throughout the process to ensure that it fully meets the needs of women and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Ness", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Debra L. Ness
President