

Raise the Cap Coalition

September 15, 2009

RE: Amendment #C3 to the America's Healthy Future Act

Dear Senator Rockefeller:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and millions of Americans with chronic diseases and conditions, thank you for your efforts to reform our healthcare system so that there will be adequate, affordable health care for all Americans. We support the insurance market reforms included in America's Healthy Future Act, especially the elimination of lifetime and annual limits on benefits. However, we have been concerned about the staggered implementation of lifetime caps for new plans and that the elimination of lifetime limits would not apply to grandfathered existing plans. Your Amendment #C3 would rectify this situation and eliminate lifetime caps more quickly.

We strongly support your Amendment to immediately eliminate lifetime caps in new policies and phase-in an elimination of annual and lifetime limits in grandfathered plans over five years. This Amendment is based on concepts in your bill, S. 1149, the Annual and Lifetime Health Care Limits Elimination Act and S. 1085, the Health Insurance Coverage Protection Act, introduced by Senators Dorgan and Snowe.

Lifetime limits on private insurance pose a considerable problem for individuals with chronic diseases and conditions. Many private insurers continue to set lifetime caps on health coverage at \$2-\$3 million; no additional coverage is provided once these limits are reached. A person with a high cost chronic disease or condition could exhaust their benefits in as few as 5 years, or even in one or two in the case of a medical crisis. President Obama has recognized the need to address this practice by including the elimination of lifetime caps in his core reform principles. In his address to Congress, President Obama promised that as soon as he signs a bill, insurance companies "will no longer be able to place some arbitrary cap on the amount of coverage you can receive in a given year or a lifetime."

While you have included an offset for this Amendment through capping itemized deductions at 35%, independent analysis by PricewaterhouseCoopers found that eliminating lifetime caps would result in more than \$11 billion in savings for state and federal governments over ten years. There are savings because individuals with high medical costs would be able to maintain their private insurance rather than be forced onto Medicaid.

Individuals with chronic diseases and disorders must not be impeded in accessing necessary health care nor should they be impoverished with unreasonable lifetime limits on benefits. We strongly support your Amendment to eliminate lifetime caps quickly and pledge to work with you to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

Alpha-1 Association
Alpha-1 Foundation
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

Arthritis Foundation
Autism Society
Baxter Healthcare Corporation
Brain Injury Association of America
Breast Cancer Network of Strength
Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Committee of Ten Thousand
Cooley's Anemia Foundation
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America
CSL Behring
GBS/CIDP Foundation International
Grifols
Hemophilia Federation of America
Huntington's Disease Society of America
Immune Deficiency Foundation
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Kids With Heart National Association for Children's Heart Disorders, Inc
National Family Caregivers Association
National Gaucher Foundation
National Health Council
National Hemophilia Foundation
National Marfan Foundation
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization for Rare Disorders
National Patient Advocate Foundation
Patient Services Incorporated
Pediatric Stroke Network
Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association
Platelet Disorder Support Association
Prevent Blindness America
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Scleroderma Foundation
Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation