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National Patient Advocate Foundation Applauds Representative Joe Courtney (D-2nd-CT) for His Continued Efforts to Eliminate Pre-Existing Condition Exclusions and Waiting Periods

Preexisting Condition Patient Protection Act of 2009 Will Provide Improved Access to Care for Patients with Chronic Illnesses

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 11, 2009) – The National Patient Advocate Foundation (NPAF) – a national, non-profit organization dedicated to the mission of creating avenues of improved patient access to health care through public policy reform at the state and federal levels – today praised Representative Joe Courtney (D-2nd - CT) for his continued efforts in support of the “Pre-existing Condition Patient Protection Act of 2009,” legislation introduced by Rep. Courtney to completely eliminate pre-existing condition exclusions and waiting periods for all individuals regardless of their type of insurance coverage. This legislation will assure access to necessary health care services at a critical time for patients.

As more Americans lose their medical insurance because of unemployment or pre-existing conditions, they are often unable to access life-saving treatments or even basic care. Three years ago, Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF), NPAF’s companion organization, identified preexisting medical conditions as a significant contributor to an individual’s inability to obtain insurance. Between 2007 and 2008, PAF documented a 146% increase in cases where preexisting conditions posed a barrier to health care coverage.

Approximately 133 million Americans, or 45% of the population, suffer from a chronic illness including 20 percent of all school-aged children. All of these individuals are at risk of facing health insurance discrimination due to their health status. The “Preexisting Condition Patient Protection Act of 2009” will prohibit the denial of health insurance coverage based on preexisting health conditions and will allow some of the nearly 46 million Americans who are uninsured to obtain necessary care for the treatment of their chronic conditions.

“By introducing this legislation, Representative Courtney has taken an important step in protecting all patients, particularly those with chronic illness who are at risk of having no health insurance,” said Nancy Davenport-Ennis, Founder and CEO of NPAF. “NPAF is proud to work with Rep. Courtney to ensure that this vital legislation is enacted and to ensure that patients across the nation are protected from health care discrimination.”

NPAF and its companion organization, the Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF), were founded on the principle that health care is a basic human need and shared social responsibility. NPAF is dedicated to working with Congress and all levels of government to overcome challenges and create solutions that will allow for high-quality, affordable health care for all. PAF directly assists patients with chronic and life-threatening conditions who are struggling with access to care issues. Last year, PAF received more than 9.5 million inquiries requesting information and provided case management services to 48,369 patients confronting denied access to health care for their diagnosis of chronic, life-threatening and debilitating conditions.

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