



# NATIONAL PATIENT ADVOCATE FOUNDATION

*A National Network for Healthcare Reform*

March 2007

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## RE: PA SB300 An Act Providing for a Statewide Comprehensive Health Care System

The National Patient Advocate Foundation (NPAF) commends Pennsylvania SB300 which establishes a comprehensive and responsible approach to ensuring the health and health security of Pennsylvania citizens.

While US Congress members and President Bush propose ideas and alternatives to the ailing American health care system, states remain at the center of the health policy storm. Several conditions synergize to create the locus of power that results in state-level health policy impacts: First, insurance is state-regulated. Second, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), while partnerships with the federal government, are state-administered. Third, Medicare is administered by contract carriers who operate at the state or regional level, including Local Coverage Determinations for new therapeutics. Fourth, state legislatures determine many conditions under which health care access is improved or by which individuals and families suffer because they lack access to a reliable health security system.

Finally, the impact of losing or gaining employment-based insurance coverage depends heavily on healthcare access policy that each state may determine by setting its own Federal Poverty Level (FPL)-based limits that define eligibility in assistance programs.

States like Pennsylvania that take the challenge seriously are to be commended. Defining the magnitude of the state's problem and analyzing factors that affect citizens' access to healthcare, then creating a thoughtful and progressive plan for incremental reform requires research and resolve. Many components of Pennsylvania's plan affirm consensus among health policy leaders regarding mechanisms that can together construct ways to increased health security. We support Pennsylvania's efforts to take meaningful, bold steps toward making access to quality healthcare a reality for every citizen.

National Patient Advocate Foundation is dedicated to improving access to healthcare through legislative and policy reform at both the state and federal levels. NPAF advocacy activities are influenced by the experience of the patients we serve through our companion organization, Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF). PAF provides case management services directly to patients at no charge to help resolve insurance, job retention, and/or debt crisis matters relative to a serious diagnosis. In 2006, over 6 million Americans contacted Patient Advocate Foundation with a request for assistance; of those, 329,036 were Pennsylvanians. We invite you to review the NPAF and PAF websites to learn more about both organizations: [www.npaf.org](http://www.npaf.org) and [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)

On behalf of NPAF's Pennsylvania Volunteer State Policy Liaisons, Sheri Putnam, Eilene Frierson, and Jack Henning, the NPAF Advocates Network volunteers in Pennsylvania, and NPAF's State Government Affairs, based in Washington, DC and Washington State, thank you for your work to establish a comprehensive statewide health care system in Pennsylvania. If we can be of assistance, please don't hesitate to contact your Pennsylvania NPAF State Policy Liaisons or NPAF State Government Affairs at 866-287-4506 or 866-706-4977.

#### REFERENCES

K. Davis, Uninsured in America: Problems and Possible Solutions, *BMJ*, February 17, 2007 334(7589):346-8