



January 15, 2010

Majority Leader Harry Reid
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Speaker Pelosi:

Thank you for your leadership in advancing health care reform through the House of Representatives and the Senate. As the national advocacy voice of direct care workers, the Direct Care Alliance thanks you for your hard work and commitment to ensuring that health care is affordable for millions of Americans, including direct care workers.

The Direct Care Alliance is particularly pleased that the bills you are working to merge have a number of key benefits for direct care workers and their families, including expanded choice and access to affordable health insurance coverage, demonstration grants for states to develop training for personal and home care aides, and Community Living and Supportive Services (CLASS) plan provisions.

While we also applaud the formation of a commission to advise Congress on health care workforce needs, we ask that you include the direct care workforce as a “high priority” health care workforce. Senators Casey, Kohl, and Feingold introduced an amendment in the Senate that was endorsed by over forty national organizations. Given the significant shortage of direct care workers that is expected in the coming years, building a stable direct care workforce that provides high-quality care and services to the elderly and people living with disabilities should be a priority of the commission. That is why we urge you to include this amendment in health care reform legislation that is passed by Congress.

Thank you for your commitment to reform our health care system. You have our full support and we will continue working with you to pass a strong health reform bill that will help ensure a stable direct care workforce by making health care more affordable. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 212.730.0741 or lvega@directcarealliance.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonila Vega".

Leonila Vega
Executive Director
Direct Care Alliance