

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) Chair Mike Honda (D-CA), along with Democratic leaders from both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, today unveiled a ground-breaking set of principles that addresses the racial and ethnic healthcare disparities in our country.

Congressman Honda used the occasion to announce his plan to introduce legislation, titled “The Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act,” that addresses health disparities by providing quality healthcare for minority patients across the country.

Rep. Honda was joined by Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (NV), Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Barack Obama (D-IL), Jon Corzine (D-NJ), and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA). As CAPAC Chair, Congressman Honda also welcomed the participation of House members representing the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Congressional Native American Caucus.

“Despite the increasing diversity of our nation, our healthcare system is not meeting the needs of our community, and our racial and ethnic minorities are all too often denied the high quality healthcare that most Americans receive,” Congressman Honda said. “Minority communities face significant obstacles to obtaining quality healthcare in the United States, including cultural and language barriers that our current healthcare system is ill-equipped to address.”

According to the Democratic legislators, legislation to address racial and ethnic health disparities should achieve the following goals:

- Expand the Health Care Safety Net;
- Diversify the Health Care Workforce;
- Combat Diseases that Disproportionately Affect Racial and Ethnic Minorities;
- Emphasize Prevention and Behavioral Health; and
- Promote the Collection and Dissemination of Data and Enhance Medical Research.

Honda noted that approximately one-third of all Asian Pacific Americans live in linguistic isolation. Where patients face such language barriers, he stated, they cannot interact with health care providers and social service agencies effectively.

“Democrats understand that providing interpreters and translation services is an important component in improving the quality of health care in this country,” Honda said. “In solidarity with the Democratic Leadership and the Minority Caucuses, we call upon our colleagues in Congress, and we call upon our Chief Executive in the White House, to follow these principles to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in this country.”

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*The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) is a bicameral and bipartisan caucus of Members of Congress of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and Members who have a strong dedication to promoting the well-being of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Founded in 1994 by then Congressman Norman Mineta, and currently chaired by Congressman Michael Honda, CAPAC has been addressing the needs of the AAPI community in all areas of American life. For more information on CAPAC, please call (202) 225-2631 or visit <http://www.honda.house.gov/capac>.*