

WASHINGTON, DC – As President Obama prepares to address a joint session of Congress this evening, leaders of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) and the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community reiterate the urgency of health care reform. The Executive Board Members of CAPAC issued the following statement:

“The health reform proposals in Congress must address all health disparities, particularly those faced by the Asian American and Pacific Islander community and those residing in the U.S. Territories.

“CAPAC remains committed to health care coverage for all. Nationally, more than one in six Asian Americans are uninsured and more than one in four Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are uninsured. We must address health care disparities that exist in all communities, and we remain steadfast in our support for a robust public option, like Medicare, in health care reform legislation. We must also protect the Medicare program, which provides an important safety net for our seniors.

“Our health care system must provide all of America's diverse populations with affordable, high quality care, and provide security for all families in our country. There is an alarming portion of minority communities that is uninsured. Still others face the real fear of losing their insurance coverage. Those with access to health care are not receiving quality care, as private providers and insurers have in large part failed to meet the language and cultural needs of racial and ethnic minorities. This is particularly dire in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities because of our diverse language and cultural needs.

“Allowing our system to blunder on is a costly mistake. Without the strong reforms that have been proposed in House legislation, the average family will pay \$1,800 more for healthcare next year. Premiums will continue to rise at a rate three times faster than inflation. Out-of-pocket costs will continue to skyrocket. We cannot afford to do nothing.

“We are hopeful and look forward to working with President Obama, the Congressional Black, Hispanic and Progressive Caucuses, and our other congressional colleagues to ensure that America has a health care system it deserves.”

The work of CAPAC is supported by advocacy organizations representing the AAPI community.

“It is critical that we act now to pass health care reform that meets the needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, and we have to make sure it includes immigrants,” said Dr. Ho Luong Tran, president and CEO of Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF). “The Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander community will not be content to sit on the sidelines in the health care reform debate. We must advocate for the needs of our community, and make sure that a public plan option is included in health care reform.”

Jeff Caballero, executive director of the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), says, “With more than one in five Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders uninsured against the crippling costs of health care today and tremendous disparities in rates of preventable diseases like liver cancer plaguing our communities, I cannot over emphasize the urgency for health care reform now. This is a matter of evolving a system long overdue for a change in the right direction—our families, our employees, our neighbors and future generations are counting on it, and on us.”

For a full list of CAPAC’s health care priorities, please visit: <http://honda.house.gov/capac/priorities.shtml#healthcare>

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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> .