

April 27, 2009



Dear Senator,

Regarding Primary Care Workforce Issues

U.S. PIRG, the Federation of State Public Interest Research Groups, is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organization. U.S. PIRG and our state affiliates stand up to powerful interests on behalf of the public interest through policy analysis, research, and strong citizen engagement. Today, I write to urge your support for legislation that will expand the health care workforce to provide the primary and preventive care that America needs.

America's health care costs are rising at an unsustainable rate. Our nation's failure to deliver quality, coordinated primary and preventive care drives these costs still higher by forcing Americans to rely on more intensive hospital, specialty, and emergency care. The bills listed below would address this growing problem by investing in our primary care workforce. U.S. PIRG urges your support, and, where appropriate, co-sponsorship of each.

- **S. 790, the Health Access and Health Professions Supply Act of 2009** (Senator Jeff Bingaman): This bill establishes a National Health Workforce Commission to address our long-term workforce issues, reforms Medicare-supported residency programs to emphasize primary care, coordinated care, and community-based care settings, and invests in medical education programs to expand the primary care workforce.
- **S. 486/H.R. 1296, the Access for All America Act of 2009** (Senator Bernie Sanders/Representative James Clyburn): This bill will dramatically expand the number of community health centers delivering cost-effective primary care and triple the federal investment in the National Health Service Corps to provide the primary care professionals that America needs.
- **S. 693/H.R. 916 Preventative Medicine and Public Health Training Act of 2009** (Senators Tom Harkin/Representative Gene Green): This bill authorizes \$43 million to fund residency programs in preventative medicine and public health, and provides financial assistance to participants.

Strengthening our primary care workforce is critical to making sure our health care system work. **U.S. PIRG urges your support for and, where appropriate, co-sponsorship of these important pieces of legislation.** Please contact me at lmcneely@pirg.org or (202)546-9707 if you wish to discuss these or related health care issues.

Yours truly,

Larry C. McNeely II
Health Care Advocate