

## **Moving Forward...Protecting Communities of Color**

March 23<sup>rd</sup> marks the one year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act being signed into law. While Republicans want to re-fight the same old political wars to give control over your health care back to insurance companies, it's time to move forward to protect our health care for communities of color. Moving forward means fixing the disparities in health care among racial and ethnic lines. Moving forward means investing in our Community Health Centers. It means holding insurance companies accountable by ending some of the worst abuses like discriminating based on a pre-existing condition or dropping coverage when you get sick. It's time to move forward. We cannot afford to go back.

**The Affordable Care Act Expands Coverage To 32 Million People.** Once fully implemented, the Affordable Care Act will expand coverage to 32 million more Americans who would not have otherwise had health insurance. Racial and ethnic minority groups will benefit greatly from this since they disproportionately comprise the uninsured. In 2009, only 79 percent of African Americans and 68 percent of Hispanics had health insurance, compared to 88 percent of Whites. [Center for American Progress, [12/16/10](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Ends The Worst Insurance Company Abuses Such As Denying Coverage Because Of A Pre-Existing Condition.** The Affordable Care Act ends some of the worst insurance company practices that disproportionately affect communities of color such as denying coverage based on a pre-existing condition and dropping coverage when you get sick. African Americans have higher rates of diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease than other groups. 35 percent of nonelderly uninsured Hispanics reported having a chronic health condition. Before, insurance companies were able to use these conditions as a reason to deny coverage. [Center for American Progress, [12/16/10](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Invests \$11 Billion For Community Health Centers That Are Critical For Communities Of Color.** The Affordable Care Act recognizes the vital role community health centers play in delivering health care to communities of color and invests \$11 billion in them over the next five years. Community health centers have become the primary medical home for millions of Americans, particularly in communities of color. They emphasize coordinated primary and preventive services that cut health disparities, and they emphasize coordination and comprehensive quality care. [Healthcare.gov, [Community Health Centers and the Affordable Care Act: Increasing Access to Affordable, Cost Effective, High Quality Care](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Provides The Information To Address Health Disparities Among Racial And Ethnic Groups.** The Affordable Care Act addresses racial and ethnic health disparities in a variety of ways. It requires funding to collect and report data based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, health literacy, and primary language. And it establishes the Office of Minority Health at the Department of Health and Human Services and a network of minority health offices located within HHS. [Center for American Progress, [12/16/10](#)]

**The Affordable Care Act Provides Incentives For Quality Doctors To Serve In Communities Of Color.** It is more difficult for communities of color to find a health professional, especially in non-English speaking areas. The Affordable Care Act addresses these challenges by: providing incentives for students from communities of color to train and work in medically underserved areas and providing grants to states, clinics and hospitals to promote the use of community health workers. These workers can be particularly helpful in hard-to-reach populations. [Center for American Progress, [12/16/10](#)]