

**American Public Health Association (APHA)**  
*Publicly-funded universal coverage for all Americans*

**Organization Description:** APHA is the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals in the world, representing more than 30,000 individual members and 20,000 additional state and local affiliate members. Its mission is to improve public health by influencing and advocating for policies that improve access to care, children's health, environmental health, public health infrastructure, disease prevention, and health disparities.

**Proposal Summary:** APHA does not have a single, comprehensive reform proposal. The following positions are drawn from a series of APHA position papers. APHA believes every person is entitled to affordable and comprehensive health coverage. It advocates for a publicly-funded health care delivery system that provides universal coverage for all Americans. APHA advocates expanding children's health insurance coverage through the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). APHA also supports offering more preventive services, assessing pharmaceutical effectiveness, and reducing prescription drug costs. In addition to their own proposal, APHA has joined the Health Coverage Coalition for the Uninsured (HCCU)<sup>1</sup> to promote principles to reform the U.S. health care system.

- **Coverage:** In the short term, APHA recommends expanding access to publicly financed programs by broadening eligibility and preserving entitlement to such programs. In the long term, APHA supports creating a publicly-funded health care delivery system that offers universal coverage for all Americans with comprehensive benefits, affordable prices and quality services. APHA urges Congress to expand insurance coverage for children by reauthorizing SCHIP with increased funding and flexibility for states. APHA recommends that Congress dedicate at least \$60 billion over five years to cover individuals eligible for but not enrolled in SCHIP. It also recommends adding Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) as an SCHIP benefit, permitting states to enroll new populations, and relaxing eligibility determination processes for the program.

HCCU's proposal initially aims to remove barriers for children to enroll in established public programs. The plan would also give tax credits to families to help offset the cost of purchasing health insurance for all children. The second phase of the initiative concentrates on expanding Medicaid eligibility to cover all adults with incomes below the federal poverty level. For those with higher incomes, HCCU recommends establishing a refundable tax credit to help cover the cost of private insurance.

- **Wellness and Prevention:** APHA supports expanding disease prevention measures including screening, education and counseling in ambulatory settings to promote healthy lifestyles and behaviors.
- **Quality:** APHA supports establishing funding for independent assessments of pharmaceuticals, focusing on comparative effectiveness, long-term effectiveness and cost effectiveness with a societal perspective. Support legislation reducing health care disparities.

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<sup>1</sup> The HCCU is comprised of sixteen national organizations that play leading roles in every aspect of federal health policy, including health plans, provider groups, advocacy organizations, a business alliance, and a pharmaceutical manufacturer.

- *Cost:* APHA seeks to reduce the cost of prescription drugs in Medicare by permitting the government to leverage its purchasing power to negotiate directly with manufacturers. It recommends instituting institute federally-regulated importation of prescription drugs from other countries. HCCU would fund its proposal through the expansion of public programs and refundable tax credits for individuals.

**Proposal Date:** 2003-2005, 2007

Sources: *Select position pieces from APHA Web site- Reauthorization of SCHIP, 2007,* <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/activities/schip>; *Ensuring Access to Care,* <http://www.apha.org/legislative/legislative/accesstocarefacts.pdf>; *Eliminating Health Disparities,* <http://www.apha.org/legislative/factsheets/disparitiesFactSheet.pdf>; *Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage,* <http://www.apha.org/legislative/factsheets/RxDrugs.pdf>; *Protecting Medicaid,* [http://www.apha.org/legislative/legislative/medicaid\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.apha.org/legislative/legislative/medicaid_factsheet.pdf); *Universal Health Care,* <http://www.apha.org/legislative/factsheets/universalHealthCare.pdf>; *Supporting Legislation for Independent Post-Marketing (Phase IV) Comparative Evaluation of Pharmaceuticals,* <http://www.apha.org/legislative/policy/2003/2003-001.pdf>; *HCCU: Press Release, 2007,* [http://www.coalitionfortheuninsured.org/news/pressrelease\\_20070118.html](http://www.coalitionfortheuninsured.org/news/pressrelease_20070118.html).