

September 21, 2009

Senate Finance Takes Up Health Bill

Call Your Senators and Urge them to Weigh in with the Finance Committee in Support of Senator Cantwell's Project 2020 Amendments

It is crunch time for health reform legislation and thus, for n4a and NASUA's efforts to get *Project 2020* included in the health reform package. This week, the Senate Finance Committee will begin consideration of Chairman Max Baucus's (D-MT) proposal, which was released last Wednesday. The Committee will "mark up" that draft by considering amendments from its members. Whatever emerges from this mark-up process will likely be the foundation for the final health reform package brought to the Senate floor (after being merged with the Senate HELP Committee bill passed back in July), therefore we must advance *Project 2020* at this stage if we are to ultimately be successful.

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), the sponsor of the *Project 2020* stand-alone bill (S. 1257), has submitted six amendments based on *Project 2020* that will be considered by the Finance Committee this week. Three of the Cantwell amendments (Amendment Numbers 285, 287 and 289) contain authorization and funding for one each of the three main components of *Project 2020*; the other three (Amendment Numbers 284, 286 and 288) authorize the programs but do not provide funding at this time.

These amendments will need the support of the Finance Committee members if they are to be approved during the mark up. That is where we need your help!

Please contact your Senators to urge them to weigh in with their colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee in support of the Cantwell *Project 2020* amendments. Ask them to reach out especially to Chairman Max Baucus and Ranking Member Charles Grassley of Iowa to express their support for the *Project 2020* amendments.

Note: If you have a Senator on the Senate Finance Committee, you have already heard from n4a about the particular importance of your direct advocacy.

Action Step to Take:

- **The Message:** Ask your Senators to express to the Finance Committee leadership their strong support for Senator Cantwell's amendments based on S. 1257, *Project 2020*.
- *Sample Script:* [Give your name and town and affiliation, if appropriate.] "Building stronger home and community-based services so older adults have a range of options in long-term care is important to me, so I am calling to ask the Senator to help advance Senator Cantwell's *Project 2020* amendments. The Senator can do this by urging his/her colleagues on the Senate Finance Committee to vote in favor of amendments # 284

through 289, particularly amendments # 285, 287 and 289, which will provide appropriate funding to implement these critical programs to help older adults stay healthier, access long-term care information and assistance, and avoid spend-down to Medicaid and unnecessary institutionalization.”