

February 14, 2013

Marilyn Tavenner
Acting Administrator
Chief Operating Officer
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Administrator Tavenner:

The undersigned 270 national, state and local organizations urge the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to translate the single, streamlined application for insurance affordability programs into at least fifteen languages. Without translated applications, one out of four expected insurance marketplace applicants who speak a language other than English at home are at high risk of being left behind. The more than 24 million limited English proficient (LEP) individuals across the country deserve equal access to the new coverage options available under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The application provides the initial entry point to apply for health insurance and is a vital component of the ACA's "no wrong door" approach to enrollment. Yet LEP individuals may suffer erroneous denials of eligibility because they do not understand what information to provide. Indeed, they may be prevented or dissuaded from accessing the insurance marketplace altogether, undermining the goal of the ACA to expand affordable insurance coverage for all Americans.

The federally facilitated exchange (FFE) must comply with both Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Section 1557 of the ACA. To prevent discrimination against LEP individuals, the FFE must ensure access and understanding for LEP consumers. In addition to the legal requirements, federal translation of the application would benefit all entities engaged in enrollment, outreach and education. Translated applications will assist in ensuring effective communication by creating a baseline for standardizing ACA-related enrollment terminology and creating translation "glossaries" that can be used by other entities for outreach, education and training, saving costs of re-translating the same terms. Translated applications can also help train bilingual staff and interpreters who will assist LEP individuals to ensure consistency and accuracy, thus aiding effective enrollment and information dissemination.

Translating applications at the federal level is cost-effective for CMS and the states. For example, if the nineteen states operating state-based exchanges use the single, streamlined application but translate it independently, the costs multiply nineteen times. CMS has already recognized the importance of translating its documents into multiple languages with its

commitment to translating beneficiary-related Medicare forms into fifteen languages. The federal investment resulted in significant efficiencies and economies of scale, benefitting virtually all Medicare providers who must comply with Title VI.

We ask that CMS commit to translating the application into at least fifteen languages and creating corresponding translation glossaries of key ACA terms that all enrollment stakeholders can access. Federal translations would save money and resources, improve access for LEP individuals, ensure compliance with federal law, and truly implement the no wrong door philosophy at the heart of creating a single, streamlined application.

For more information, contact Priscilla Huang, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, (202) 466-7772 or phuang@apiahf.org or Mara Youdelman, National Health Law Program at (202) 289-7661 or youdelman@healthlaw.org.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

AARP

African American Health Alliance

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America

Alliance for a Just Society

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American College of Healthcare Executives

American Diabetes Association

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Heart Association

American Hospital Association

American Lung Association

American Nurses Association

American Translators Association

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian Liver Center at Stanford University

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)

Association for Community Affiliated Plans

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Minority Health Professions Schools

Boat People SOS

CareSource

Caring Ambassadors Program
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters
Center for Children and Families at Georgetown University
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc.
Center for Popular Democracy
Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
Civil Liberties and Public Policy
Community Action Partnership
Community Catalyst
Consumers Union
Cross-Cultural Communications
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
DiversityRx - Resources for Cross Cultural Health Care
Doctors for America
Enroll America
Epilepsy Foundation
Families USA
Farmworker Justice
First Focus
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
Guam Communications Network
Healthcare Leadership Council
Hepatitis B Foundation
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Ibis Reproductive Health
International Medical Interpreters Association
InterpretAmerica
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
Meharry Medical College
Migrant Legal Action Program
MomsRising
Morehouse School of Medicine
NAACP
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Free and Charitable Clinics
National Association of Health Underwriters

National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians (NCAPIP)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC)
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Minority AIDS Council
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Physicians Alliance
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Urban League
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
National Women's Law Center
Obesity Action Coalition
OCA
Project Inform
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Single Stop USA
Society for Public Health Education
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Stanford University School of Medicine
The Center for APA Women
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine, Nursing & Allied Health
Voices for America's Children
Young Invincibles

State organizations

Arizona

Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers
Asian Pacific Community in Action
Care 1st Health Plan AZ

Children's Action Alliance

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Legal Aid of Arkansas

California

Alliance for a Better Community

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), California

APAIT Health Center

Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network (APIsCAN)

Asian Law Alliance

Asian Pacific American Legal Center

Association for Chinese Families of the Disabled

California Church IMPACT

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

California Primary Care Association

Cal-Islanders Humanitarian Association

Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at Berkeley Law

Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship

Children Now

Chinatown Child Development Center

Chinatown Service Center

COFEM

Community Health Councils

Earth Mama Healing, Inc.

InterpretAmerica

Korean Community Center of the East Bay

Korean Resource Center

Koreatown Youth & Community Center

Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

LIFETIME

LTSC Community Development Corporation

Madera Coalition for Community Justice

Mid-City Community Advocacy Network (Mid-City CAN)

Pacific Islander Cancer Survivors Network

Special Service for Groups

Street Level Health Project

Taulama for Tongans

Thai CDC

Vision y Compromiso

Colorado

Colorado Center on Law and Policy

District of Columbia

CARECEN
Centronia
Housing Works
La Clinica del Pueblo
Many Languages One Voice
Mary's Center
Multicultural Community Service
The Children's Partnership
The Women's Collective

Florida

Florida Legal Services

Georgia

Georgia Legal Services Program

Hawaii

CHOW Project
Hep Free Hawaii

Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Campaign for Better Health Care
LAF (Formerly Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago)

Iowa

Child and Family Policy Center
Mercy Medical Center

Kentucky

Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Kentucky Primary Care Association
Kentucky Youth Advocates
KentuckyOne Health

Louisiana

MQVN Community Development Corporation, Inc. (MQVN CDC)
Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans

Maine

Maine Equal Justice Partners

Maryland

Advocates for Children & Youth
Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.

Maryland Citizens' Health Initiative Education Fund
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
Public Justice Center
Viet Nam Medical Assistance Program

Massachusetts

Action for Boston Community Development
Asian Women for Health
Disability Policy Consortium
Health Care For All (Massachusetts)
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Michigan

Center for Civil Justice
Michigan Consumers for Healthcare
West Michigan Asian American Association, Inc

Minnesota

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
TakeAction Minnesota

New Jersey

Latino Action Network

New Mexico

Disability Rights New Mexico
HELP-New Mexico, INC
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Voices for Children
New Mexico Alliance for Retired Americans
NM Asian Family Center
Vision for Dignity, Access, and Accountability in Healthcare (VIDA)

New York

Coalition for Asian American Children & Families
Community Service Society of New York
Empire Justice Center
Health Care For All New York
HIV Law Project
Kalusugan Coalition, Inc.
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Project CHARGE

North Carolina

Action for Children NC

Legal Services of Southern Piedmont
MAXIMUS

Ohio

Akron Children's Hospital
Asian American Community Services
Asian Services In Action, Inc. (ASIA)
Contact Center
Easter Seals of Ohio
Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
Mercy Health
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio
Nueva Luz Urban Resource Center
Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association
Ohio Poverty Law Center
Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
The Legal Aid Society of Columbus
UHCAN Ohio
Voices for Ohio's Children

Oregon

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
Mosaic Medical
NCIHC
Oregon State Public Interest Research Group

Pennsylvania

ASIAC (AIDS Services in Asian Communities)
Benefits Data Trust
Centro Hispano Daniel Torres Inc.
Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley
Community Legal Services of Philadelphia
Hispanic Center of Reading
Jefferson Hospital
Jefferson School of Population Health
Nationalities Service Center
Pennsylvania Chapter Society for Public Health Education
Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP)
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition
Public Citizens for Children and Youth
SEAMAAC, Inc.
Thomas Jefferson University

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Free Clinic
The Economic Progress Institute

South Carolina

North Chapter of SOPHE
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Tennessee

Tennessee Justice Center

Texas

Center for Public Policy Priorities
Light and Salt Association
Seton Healthcare Family
South East Center for Agricultural Health & Injury Prevention
Univeristy Health System

Virginia

Virginia Consumer Voices

Washington

Children's Alliance
Doctors for America, Washington State branch
ElderCare Alliance
Health Care for All-Washington
Hopelink
International Community Health Services
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Occupy for Seattle's Healthcare for the 99% + 1%
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action
Samoan National Nurses Association (SNNA)
SEIU Healthcare 1199NW
SEIU Local 925
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Washington CAN!
Washington State Coalition for Language Access
Washington State Hospital Association

Wisconsin

La Causa, Inc.
Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health
Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association

Cc: Julie Bataille, Office of Communications
Ida Kelley, Office of Public Engagement
Gary Cohen, Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight
Cynthia Mann, Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services

Cara James, CMS Office of Minority Health
Leon Rodriguez, HHS Office of Civil Rights
Nadine Gracia, HHS Office of Minority Health