



League of United Latin American Citizens

March 26, 2014

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The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's largest and oldest Latino civil rights organization in the country, I write to urge you to take action to ensure that as many of the 10.2 million uninsured Latinos now eligible for coverage have the adequate time and support necessary to secure a plan that suits their needs. While our organization appreciates President Obama's recent announcement to extend the March 31 deadline for people who have had trouble finishing the enrollment process, we are concerned that countless of Latinos will not have had the opportunity to even begin the process altogether.

As you may know, in 2013, LULAC was selected by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a *Champion of Coverage* for our commitment and efforts to educate and engage the community on the importance of the Affordable Care Act. As a strong advocate for the ACA, from its original inception in Congress to its ongoing implementation as federal law, our organization has great faith in the promise of a well implemented Affordable Care Act. To this end, LULAC has worked to mobilize its over 135,000 volunteer members across 37 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, to work side-by-side with your HHS, as well as a coalition of numerous non-profit organizations, to lead enrollment summits, information campaigns, and grassroots efforts to promote the new health opportunities created through the Affordable Care Act.

It is because of our strong support for the Affordable Care Act, that we are deeply concerned about recent reports noting the low participation, outreach to, and support for Latinos leading up to the arrival of the March 31, 2014 enrollment deadline. A recent Gallop poll released March 2014, for example, noted that while Latinos were expected to be one of the largest beneficiaries of the ACA, they remain the ethnic group with the highest uninsured rate. In addition, the *2014 Health Americas Survey: Hispanics and the Affordable Care Act*, also found that (82%) of uninsured Hispanics have not looked online for information on healthcare.gov or their state's marketplace website, 62%) of uninsured Hispanics report they do not have enough information about ACA to understand how it will impact them and their family, and (46%) of uninsured Hispanics report that they have heard "only a little" or "nothing at all" about the March 31st deadline to have health insurance or pay a fine.

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Given these reports, we ask that you take the necessary steps to ensure that as many of the 10.2 million uninsured Latinos now eligible for coverage have the adequate time and support necessary to secure a plan that suits their needs. Potential actions could include:

1. Providing an extension of the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) enrollment period past March 31, 2014 for all Americans, not just those who have started the enrollment process
2. Waiving any federal fees related to the ACA until more Latinos, and Americans in general, have an opportunity to begin the enrollment process altogether for a designated period of time
3. Providing/expanding hardship waivers for anyone who did not apply on time for a good cause
4. Refunding the mandate fee for people who apply during the next enrollment period, especially if they attest that they did not apply for good cause
5. Providing an extension of the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) enrollment period past March 31, 2014 in states that did not expand Medicaid, to allow individuals more to seek coverage in the exchanges

Most importantly, our organization strongly requests that additional resources are made available to conduct the culturally and linguistically competent outreach that is necessary to reach the millions of Latinos who have yet to be served. While, I cannot emphasize enough how much our organization appreciates the extensive work done by HHS and other partners working to enroll Latinos, and other Americans, for health insurance, as we have been an active participant and witness to the work, it is extremely important to ensure that all of the 10.2 million uninsured Latinos now eligible for coverage have the adequate time and support necessary to secure a plan that suits their needs.

LULAC has been supportive of your previous use of authority with regards to other statutory deadlines to implement the employer mandate and hope that you will take our organization's feedback into account as this March 31st deadline nears.

We look forward to continue working with you on this very important issue. If there are any questions or should you need more information, please have your staff reach out to Luis Torres, Director of Policy, at (202) 833-6130 or at latorres@lulac.org.

Sincerely,



Margaret Moran
LULAC National President