

National Medical Association (NMA)

Improving access to quality and affordable health care for minorities

Organization Description: Founded in 1895, NMA is one of the nation's oldest and largest associations representing more than 30,000 African-American physicians and their patients. It has a range of health care advocacy issues that are generally targeted toward minority populations and reducing health disparities.

Proposal Summary: NMA is dedicated to eliminating health care disparities for all Americans. Their advocacy work includes promoting more minority health professionals, preserving the health care safety net and promoting universal health insurance coverage. Many of NMA's advocacy positions are aligned with policies established by other organizations with which NMA partners.

- **Coverage:** NMA supports the principles outlined in *Insuring America's Health*, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report released in 2004 on health insurance coverage in the U.S. NMA believes that health care coverage should be continuous, affordable, and sustainable. It views the growing uninsured population as an urgent issue that needs to be fixed. NMA is also concerned about preserving the health care safety net and advocates to maintain sufficient funding for Medicaid.
- **Wellness and Prevention:** NMA endorses the strategies of Healthy People 2010, which provides a framework for prevention in the US. It identifies the most significant preventable threats to health for Americans and establishes national goals to reduce those threats. NMA partners with Healthy People 2010 to advocate and support preventative health care strategies on a national level.
- **Health Information Technology (IT):** NMA supports using health IT to reduce health care costs. It also aims to improve the collection of data that tracks the health status of minority populations.
- **Quality:** NMA does not support current pay-for-performance (P4P) initiatives because it believes such initiatives may compromise access to care for minority populations. NMA believes that current P4P measures will further widen racial disparities in health care because the measures do not adequately reflect different population profiles like those of minorities. NMA believes P4P data collection and analyses should reflect clinical characteristics of minority populations.
- **Cost:** NMA is concerned about the burden of medical liability and malpractice insurance to physician practices since it is reducing access to care for many minority and rural populations. NMA supports solutions such as caps on non-economic damages in malpractice litigation, reforming how insurance companies set premiums on malpractice insurance, and considering medical courts as a viable alternative to the tort system.
- **Other:** NMA works to create health care parity for minorities by increasing the number of minority health professionals, ensuring equal access to quality health care, and reducing the burden of poor health on minorities. It also works on making sure government programs are properly targeting minority populations, such as P4P initiatives and biodefense planning and preparation.

Proposal Date: 2006

Source: NMA Health Policy – Where the NMA Stands,
http://www.nmanet.org/index.php/HealthPol_sub/where_%20the_%20nma_%20stands.