

**Legislative Updates
Advocacy Action Alerts
From Epilepsy Foundation's "Highlights from the Hill"**

July 10, 2009

Health Care Reform

Draft legislation continues to be discussed by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee and in the House through the Energy and Commerce, Education and Labor and Ways and Means committees. The draft bills include important provisions for many people with epilepsy. While many decisions have yet to be made, congressional leaders continue to push for final legislative language and committee action by the August recess with a conference between both chambers likely after the recess.

The Epilepsy Foundation's top priority is making sure that people affected by epilepsy have access to the medications and treatments they need to effectively manage the condition. The Foundation is especially pleased that the House language included protections against discrimination in benefit design and provider networks. The Foundation believes that health care reform legislation should include protections to ensure that people with epilepsy or any chronic health condition are not left out of benefit packages, drug formularies, and provider networks and are not limited in accessing needed services. This type of discrimination could occur in plans that do not offer adequate prescription drug formularies for anti-epileptic medications, fail to provide a robust network of neurologists that will serve patients in the plan's coverage network, or put the costs for such treatment or providers at a much higher rate than other conditions or treatments. The Foundation supports many key issues for people with epilepsy that are included in both the Senate and House draft legislation:

1. Insurers may not deny coverage for pre-existing conditions.
2. Discrimination based on an individual's medical history or condition is prohibited for coverage renewal.
3. Protections against basing cost on an individual's medical history or condition.

In support of Congressional action on health care reform this year, the Foundation has *created* *Speak Up Speak Out* action alerts for advocates to share their story with members of Congress. We have also joined in several national call-in days in support of health care reform. This action alert will remain active along with a toll-free call-in number to reach the Washington D.C. switchboard for Congress throughout the month of July. To access this call to action, follow this link. <http://capwiz.com/efa/callalert/index.tt?alertid=13655851>