



DOCTORS SPEAK OUT ABOUT WELFARE REFORM

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As physicians and public health officials we support the *Finding Common Ground* initiative entitled “Doctors Speak Out About Welfare Reform,” which provides us with a deeper understanding of the impact of welfare reform policies on poor women and children with chronic illness. Specifically:

- A significant portion of the TANF population is limited in their ability to work due to chronic illness;
- Families with chronic illness are not receiving other benefits and supports; and
- There are inadequate national- and state-level health data available on the impact of welfare reform on poor women and children.

Based on these empirical findings, we support the recommendations that health be considered when the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act is reauthorized this year. Exemptions and waivers should be allowed for women and children with special health needs, including chronic illness, domestic violence and depression. Furthermore, the reauthorized legislation should mandate data collection to monitor health.

Even those who consider welfare reform to have been successful concur that families with chronic illness have not fared well. We consider it critical that Congress know that the medical community cares about these important issues.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Academy of Pediatrics

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Medical Student Association

American Medical Women’s Association

American Public Health Association

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Medical Association

Physicians for Reproductive Health and Choice

Physicians for Women’s Health

Society for General and Internal Medicine