

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 24, 2013

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

When fully implemented, the Affordable Care Act represents a bold step forward in reforming our nation's health care system. It has the potential to improve the quality of care we all receive and provides the opportunity for millions of Americans to purchase quality, affordable health insurance.

The newly created federal and state health insurance marketplaces are intended to allow consumers the opportunity to compare health insurance options and find a plan that fits their needs and their budgets. For three years, we have been eagerly waiting for the launch of these marketplaces. However, now that the marketplaces are open, we have become discouraged and frustrated with the problems and interactions that are occurring with the Affordable Care Act's federally-administered website, healthcare.gov.

As long as these substantial technology glitches persist, we are losing valuable time to educate and enroll people in insurance plans. Our constituents are frustrated, and we fear that the longer the website is not functional opportunities for people to log on, learn about their insurance choices, and enroll will be lost.

Given the existing problems with healthcare.gov and other state-run marketplace websites that depend on the federally-administered website, we urge you to consider extending open enrollment beyond the current end date of March 31, 2014. Extending this period will give consumers critical time in which to become familiar with the website and choose a plan that is best for them. Individuals should not be penalized for lack of coverage if they are unable to purchase health insurance due to technical problems.

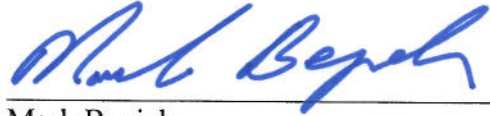
The Affordable Care Act has already had a significant impact on the lives of millions of Americans; seniors are now paying less for their prescription drugs, critical preventive care services are available for free and important work is being done to improve the quality of care we receive. Americans will now have the opportunity to receive tax credits to purchase quality health insurance, and starting in January 2014, insurance companies will no longer be able to deny health coverage because of a pre-existing condition or drop coverage if someone is sick.

We appreciate your efforts to fully implement this law and look forward to working with you to accomplish that goal. Thank you for considering our requests to extend the open enrollment period if the healthcare.gov substantial technology glitches continue.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



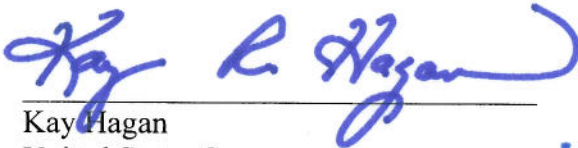
Mark Begich
United States Senator



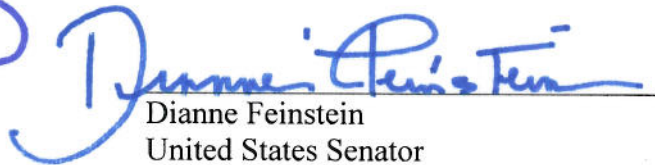
Mark Pryor
United States Senator



Mary Landrieu
United States Senator



Kay Hagan
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



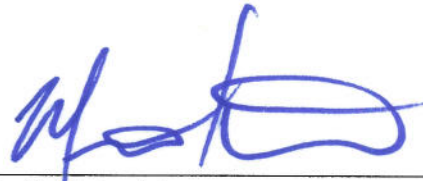
Mark Udall
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Michael Bennet
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator