Dear Madam Speaker, Leaders, Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The undersigned patient, consumer, provider, research, employer, and professional organizations representing the Friends of NCHS thank you for your support of the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). NCHS, as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, provides critical data on all aspects of our health care system through data cooperatives and surveys that serve as a gold standard for data collection around the world. We respectfully urge you to finalize the FY 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill without further delay, and to provide the highest of the approved House and Senate funding levels for the agency’s core data collection programs.

NCHS provides the data you and others need to improve and continuously evaluate health and health care. For example, the agency collects data on chronic disease prevalence, health care disparities, emergency room use, teen pregnancy, infant mortality, causes of death, the
adoption and use of HIT, and rates of insurance to name a few. These data are used by the Census Bureau in informing its population estimates and projections; by USDA in developing nutrition policies that undergird multibillion dollar federal food assistance programs; by state and local governments and public health officials; by federal policymakers; and by demographers, epidemiologists, health services researchers, and other scientists.

The health data collected by NCHS are an essential part of the nation’s statistical and public health infrastructure, as demonstrated by the breadth of organizations participating in the Friends of NCHS. With your continuing support, recent investments in NCHS have helped the agency begin to rebuild after years of underfunding and restore the collection of essential health data. With your continued support, NCHS will modernize its data collection efforts to produce higher quality, more timely data.

The Friends of NCHS remains dedicated to ensuring the agency’s continued vital role in monitoring our nation’s health, and we look forward to working with you to further strengthen the agency. For more information on the Friends of NCHS, contact David Helms with the Coalition for Health Services Research at 202.292.6700 or e-mail at david.helms@academyhealth.org.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Better Children’s Diets
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association for Respiratory Care
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Emergency Physicians
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Heart Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Nutrition
American Statistical Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Population Centers
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Coalition for the Advancement of Health Through Behavioral and Social Sciences Research
Coalition for Health Services Research
Coalition to Protect Research
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Japanese American Citizens League
March of Dimes Foundation
Marketing Research Association
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Business Group on Health
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Osteoporosis Foundation
National Psoriasis Foundation
North American Primary Care Research Group
Population Association of America
Safe States Alliance
Society for Women’s Health Research

Society of Teachers of Family Medicine