



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **AAPCHO Commends the Reintroduction of COFA Act**

**WASHINGTON** – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) today issued the following statement welcoming the reintroduction of the Covering Our Freely Associated States Allies Act (COFA Act). The bipartisan bill would reinstate Medicaid eligibility for more than 61,000 citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS)– the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau—living in the United States and its territories under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

“For too long, COFA citizens living in the United States have been denied health care access because they are ineligible to enroll in Medicaid. These residents contribute immensely to their communities and our nation, yet many experience health challenges, including disproportionately high rates of chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity and some cancers, because they are unable to afford the care they need.

AAPCHO commends Representatives Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS), Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Steve Womack (R-AR), Ed Case (D-HI), and Gregorio Sablan (D-MP) for introducing the COFA Act. This important legislation will restore Medicaid eligibility for COFA citizens living in the United States and correct an oversight Congress made during the 1996 welfare reform when it excluded them from the list of qualified non-citizens.

We applaud the introduction of the COFA Act in the House of Representatives. Together with companion legislation introduced in the Senate by Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Brian Schatz (D-HI) earlier this year, we call on Congress to fix this injustice, pass this bill, and restore Medicaid eligibility to COFA residents.”

### **About AAPCHO**

AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit [www.aapcho.org](http://www.aapcho.org).

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