

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 10, 1994

The Honorable Olympia Snowe
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Olympia:

I was pleased to learn that the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues has called for a comprehensive package of benefits that includes preventive care focusing on early detection and treatment of breast cancer. As you well know, the statistics on the increasing incidence of breast cancer are overwhelming. According to the National Breast Cancer Coalition, one in nine women in the United States will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. Over two and a half million women in the United States have breast cancer today, and this year another 182,000 American women will be diagnosed with the disease -- approximately one woman every three minutes.

I believe that the Health Security Act addresses women's health, and particularly the threat of breast cancer, aggressively and comprehensively. The Act will guarantee coverage of a comprehensive package of benefits to all women, whether they are healthy or sick, married or single, working or unemployed, wealthy or poor. It will provide a broad range of preventive screening, tests and check-ups at no cost. This is a tremendous improvement over the coverage that most people have today. For example, only 30 percent of insurers cover routine physicals for adults. Even among individuals enrolled in health maintenance organizations, over 50 percent pay cost sharing for preventive services.

The proposed Health Security Act reflects the most recent and valid scientific evidence. It is also based on the recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American College of Physicians. Under our proposal, when new scientific data becomes available, the National Health Board is empowered to adjust the package of clinical preventive services. Until then, women of any age will be covered for clinician visits, which include clinical breast exams, and screening mammograms, and will pay a standard copayment when they need these services. All women over 50 will receive routine mammogram screening every other year at no cost. Clinician visits will be covered without cost sharing every three years for women ages 20 to 39 and every other year for women ages 40 to 64. Furthermore,

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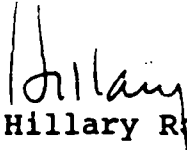
women who are defined to be at risk for breast cancer may receive clinician visits and mammograms beyond those provided in the periodicity schedule without cost sharing.

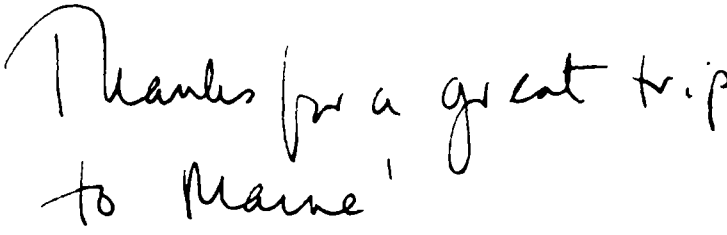
In addition, the Act acknowledges that coverage alone will not guarantee that all women receive appropriate medical care. The effectiveness of mammography screening is more likely to be improved by extending testing to women who are not currently being screened than by increasing the frequency of testing. The Act therefore includes an access initiative designed to assure that individuals have real access to the full range of health services provided under the Act, needed support services such as translation and transportation, and an adequate choice of providers and health plans.

Finally, the Health Security Act builds on the Clinton Administration's commitment to invest in research on breast cancer. This year, the National Institutes of Health increased its breast cancer research budget by 44 percent, from \$208 million to almost \$300 million. Under the Health Security Act, new research initiatives will target the prevention of disease affecting women, including breast cancer, reproductive health and osteoporosis.

I, and so many other women, appreciate the contribution of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues to this important debate. I look forward to working with you and other members of the Caucus in the coming weeks as Congress considers the Health Security Act.

Sincerely yours,


Hillary Rodham Clinton


Thanks for a great trip
to Maine!