



January 2006

Dear New Jersey Residents,

Fighting obesity, and the challenges that obesity can present with regard to quality of life and productivity, is difficult for many Americans. Aetna is committed to helping all people achieve and maintain health and wellness, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to support the New Jersey Mayors Wellness Campaign through a \$200,000 grant as well as hands-on collaboration. The Mayors Wellness Campaign is embarking on innovative ways to help New Jersey mayors work with local government, schools, employers and other community groups to implement programs to combat obesity in their communities.

To really make an impact, health care and healthy lifestyle programs have to be focused locally. The New Jersey Mayors Wellness Campaign can make a difference because its programs and information can be appropriately tailored for the diverse populations that make up New Jersey communities.

Addressing disparities in health care is an important focus for Aetna, so we are particularly pleased that the campaign reaches out with culturally specific information for different racial and ethnic groups.

We know from the work under way at Aetna to eliminate cultural and racial disparities in health care that having cultural and ethnic materials is crucial. To determine what disparities exist in our membership, we began to collect racial and ethnic data in 2002. To date, more than 2.5 million members have voluntarily shared that data. Coupled with Aetna's analytical tools, we use the data to identify disparities, support and encourage new research, and test new approaches to reducing disparities.

For example, we continue to improve our prevention and disease management programs in recognition of how members can benefit from culturally appropriate education programs. These programs help them improve their knowledge of how to best access care and participate in treatment decisions. We also instituted an internal cultural competency training program, which has increased awareness of cultural disparities and improved the way Aetna helps members navigate the health care system.

More than 1.5 million New Jersey residents are Aetna members, and we continue to encourage them to share their racial and ethnic data through our member self-service website, Aetna Navigator. This information, along with Aetna's research and expertise, can be used to help support the Mayors Wellness Campaign and local initiatives.

We believe that the Mayors Wellness Campaign, along with community support, can reach its goal of providing local leadership with model programs that impact inactivity, obesity and the associated health risks for New Jersey residents. We are pleased to be participating and look forward to assisting in improving the health and wellness of New Jersey residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cha M Cutler MD'.

Charles M. Cutler, M.D.
National Medical Director, Quality Management and Clinical Integration