



POSITION STATEMENT
Federal Health Care Reform

Background

The current state of Health Care throughout the United States is in crisis. The system is very cumbersome and costs continue to rise each year. As Health Care costs continue to rise, the business community struggles to provide adequate and affordable health care plans to their employees.

The Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC supports legislative action to:

- Retain viable employer-sponsored health care. Employers provide voluntary health insurance to over 177 million people. ERISA allows many of them the flexibility to provide uniform benefits to their employees. ERISA is the backbone of employer-provided coverage and must be preserved.
- Reform the delivery system including payment and reimbursement reform to reduce costs while increasing quality and outcomes including: implementation of comprehensive strategies such as health information technology, wellness, prevention, disease management, and coordination of care.
- Create a more vibrant private health insurance market for individuals and small businesses.
- Hold down soaring health care costs due to the explosive growth in medical liability awards and insurance costs through tort reform including specialized health courts.
- Encourage more Americans to purchase health insurance by enacting refundable tax credits for that purpose.
- Encourage more Americans to save for medical expenses tax-free, expanding Health Saving Accounts, and allowing those with Flexible Spending Accounts to roll over unused balances to pay for future medical expenses.

The Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC opposes legislative action that would:

- Create a Government-Run (Public) Plan: A government-run plan would be an unfair competitor, with the government acting as both the team owner and the referee. Government programs shift costs to the private sector. The Lewin Group estimates 130 million people would move from private to public insurance. This could lead to a government-controlled single-payer system.
- Create Employer Mandates: Punishing employers who cannot afford to provide health insurance coverage, including requirements to pay or play, is not the answer. Employer mandates, by their nature limit flexibility and innovation-the cornerstone of American health care.
- Create Minimum Required Coverage Level: Proposing a huge Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP)-like a minimum coverage package will bankrupt employers and workers. Cadillac, gold-plated coverage like this will not appeal to the young. The minimum level of coverage should be more akin to a high-deductible health plan with coverage of preventative services.
- Impose additional tax burdens on individuals or businesses: The implementation of new taxes and fees for businesses and/or individuals that cannot afford health insurance would be dramatically counterproductive. Further, the taxation of health benefits will lead to a reduction in benefits offered by employers and will lead to higher taxes for many individuals and businesses.

Position:

The Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC supports Health Care Reform that is meaningful, appropriate, and above all, does not negatively affect employers and employees or inhibit fair competition in the private sector.

Date: August 28, 2009

Chair: Michael Warfel

Committee: Health

Date: September 3, 2009

Chairs: Sheilah Borne; Deb Suder

Committee: Government Relations

Harrisburg Regional Chamber Board of Directors: September 9, 2009