



PA HEALTH ACCESS NETWORK

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CONTACT:
Berry Friesen at 717.471.9691

Statement on New Report Showing Consequences if Health Reform Fails

A new Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) report projects that if federal reform efforts are not enacted, within 10 years the cost of health care for businesses could double and the number of uninsured Americans could reach 66 million – with middle-income families hardest hit. The report, conducted by researchers from the Urban Institute, was released today in Washington, DC. For more information, go to www.rwjf.org/healthreform.

(Harrisburg) - Berry Friesen, Public Affairs Manager for the Pennsylvania Health Access Network (PHAN), issued the following statement in response to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) report:

"It comes as no surprise to Pennsylvanians to hear that our health care system is broken and getting worse, but a new report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) gives us a window into the future to see just how bad things could get if we don't take actions to fix it.

"The research shows us that if national health reform fails, there would be a dramatic decline in the numbers of people insured through their employers, and millions more would become uninsured. There would be large growth in public programs, major increases in health care spending and growing levels of uncompensated care. While all income levels would be affected, middle-class working families would be hardest hit.

"In Pennsylvania, we can't afford for our congressional delegation and their colleagues in Washington to get this wrong. Already before the recession, we had more than 1 million people in our state who lacked health coverage and did not get the care they need. One in eight working-aged adults is impacted by this. These individuals are forced to gamble every day that they won't get sick or injured.

"Our businesses are struggling under the weight of ever increasing health care costs. During these tough economic times, many are shifting costs to their employees and other are dropping their health plans entirely. In general, workplace coverage is declining. Unless we reform the health care system, economic recovery will not solve our problem; costs will keep rising and workplace coverage will continue declining.

"Fixing our health care system won't be easy. Fundamental changes must be made if we are to achieve a sustainable health care system that covers everyone and is affordable to our

1500 North Second Street, Suite 11 • Harrisburg, PA 17102



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society as a whole. These changes will impact how insurance carriers do business, how medical providers treat their patients, how employers cover their employees, and how we as consumers take responsibility for our own health. Painful as some of those changes will be, the alternative of declining coverage and rising costs is even more painful.

"We can do this. The key building blocks of a sustainable, humane system have been identified: reining in costs, focusing on quality care, and ensuring that all Americans have access to coverage plans and doctors. Now we simply must resolve to get this done together - patients and doctors, businesses and government, Democrats and Republicans - by working together."

The Pennsylvania Health Access Network (PHAN) is a statewide coalition of organizations working to protect high quality health insurance coverage for individuals and businesses, and expand coverage to the uninsured. To learn more, go to www.pahealthaccess.org.
