

Health Care Can't Wait. Back President Obama's Call for Immediate Congressional Action on Health Care Reform Legislation!

Congress has to act on health care reform before they go home for their August recess. Health care costs are crushing families, business and government at all levels. Rising health care costs at the Federal and State level are squeezing out out spending for all other non-health care priorities. Health care can't wait.

Labor calls on House Members to pass the "Tri-Committee" Health Care Reform Bill this month. It meets President Obama's test, and labor's test, for comprehensive, progressive legislation.

Under the bill:

- **A public health insurance plan would make reform work. It would bring down costs and guarantee quality affordable health care for all.** Giving everyone the choice of a strong public health insurance plan will inject needed competition into the market and drive lower costs and improved quality across all plans. It will also mean that health care will be there for all of us, no matter what.
- **Employers would be required to pay their fair share. This will** strengthen what works – the employer-based insurance that covers 160 million Americans. Employers must be required to either offer coverage to their workers or pay into a fund to finance coverage for uninsured workers. Doing so will hold down federal costs, which all taxpayers have to cover, by preventing employers from dumping their workers into the new subsidized plans. It will also level the playing field so free rider firms can't continue to shift costs to the employers that offer good benefits
- **Pre-Medicare retirees would be able to maintain their coverage because of cost relief.** Employers that offer coverage to their pre-65 retirees incur enormous expense, but without that coverage, retirees have no affordable options for finding coverage on their own. The House bill would provide relief to employers and union funds that provide coverage to pre-Medicare retirees.

The costs of health reform would be borne by those who can afford it, not by taxing health benefits of hard-working families. President Obama has been promoting a limit on itemized deductions for upper income taxpayers that would, on its own, would raise \$350 billion over 10 years. The House bill includes a small surtax on the wealthiest Americans. Either would make up the difference between the savings from reform and the total cost of the reform. It rejects proposals to ask working families with good benefits to pay more to keep them. It recognizes that a new tax on job-based benefits will have the biggest hit on workers in small firms, plans with significant numbers of older workers, retirees, sicker workers and families with children.