



**Consumers for  
AFFORDABLE  
Health Care**

*Advocating the right to quality, affordable  
health care for every man, woman and child*

# News Release

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## **NEW REPORT SHOWS CONSEQUENCES IF HEALTH REFORM FAILS** **Consumer Group Concerned about What this Means for Maine People**

(Augusta) It's not a surprise to Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) 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.

RWJF's research shows if national health reform fails there would be a dramatic decline in numbers of people insured through employers, and millions more would become uninsured. There would be large growth in public insurance 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 Maine, we can't afford for Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Representatives Chellie Pingree and Mike Michaud along with their colleagues in Washington to get this wrong. Already there are about 125,000 people in our state lacking health insurance and not getting the care they need. Hundreds of thousands more have insurance that covers so little, they still can't afford to see the doctor when they need to. These people are forced to gamble everyday that they won't get sick or injured. Our businesses are struggling with the ever increasing health care costs. During these tough economic times, more Mainers and Americans are losing their jobs and health insurance. Every time the unemployment rate goes up by just one percent, thousands of Mainers and a million Americans lose their health coverage. Now more than ever, we must ensure we have quality, affordable health care to keep our families healthy and financially secure.

Fixing our health care system won't be easy. And not everyone is going to get exactly what they want. If we all work together—patients, doctors, businesses, government, Democrats, Republicans—we can build on what works in the system and fix what's broken. That work involves reining in costs, focusing on quality care and ensuring all Americans have choice in plans and in doctors so they can decide what's best for them.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care is working hard to make these things happen for Maine people. This year, the economy is preventing expanding access to health care and coverage by traditional means. But there are still ways we can save money in our health care system and down the line, reinvest that money into both expanding health care access and bringing down costs for those who already have insurance. By getting more information from our insurers and providers, we will be armed with more tools to make better health care choices and spend our hard earned dollars more wisely. Those wise decisions are the framework for ongoing and meaningful health care reform. While we hope good reform happens nationally, we still need to provide protections for people here in Maine. As the RWJF report shows, we can no longer wait for change, we need to act now. Lives literally depend on it.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that has been helping Maine people get quality, affordable health care for more than 20 years. If you have any public or private insurance questions please call our toll free HelpLine at 1-800-965-7476.

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### **For more information or to schedule interviews contact:**

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