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## **MAINE BUSINESSES, UNIONS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, HEALTH & CONSUMER ADVOCATES SUPPORT HEALTH REFORM THAT'S AFFORDABLE TO ALL**

### **20+ Organizations Send Letter to Maine's Congressional Delegation Outlining Standards that Must Exist for Any Reform Plan to Succeed**

(Augusta) Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) along with more than twenty other Maine businesses, unions, religious groups, health organizations, and consumer advocates are all on the same page when it comes to health care reform (see below for complete list of those who are involved with this effort). These groups all agree: We need change now, and we need it to include affordable and comprehensive health coverage that meets the health care needs of all of Maine's and the country's hardworking families. As the Senate Finance and HELP (Health, Education, Labor and Pension) Committees finishes their work on a health reform plan, the Maine groups thought it was crucial for our Congressional leaders to have information about how important it is for families to have access to health coverage they can afford. The groups sent a letter to Maine's Congressional Delegation outlining what any health reform plan must include in order to work for our state and country.

“The number one reason that people lack health care coverage is that they cannot afford it. We need to have a health reform plan that includes coverage with sliding scale rates based on income for lower and middle-income families. We also need to ensure that benefits cover the care people need to stay healthy and prevent illness. If we don't address affordability for families then we won't accomplish what we set out to do—help all Americans get the health care they need when they need it,” says CAHC Communications Coordinator, Cherilee Budrick.

The following components are some of what the group outlined in their letter to Maine's delegation as being necessary for a successful health reform plan for all Americans. (Refer to attached letter for complete details of recommendations.)

#### **Any health reform plan must include:**

- An affordability scale that includes all out of pocket costs -- premiums, deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments and uses sliding scale rates based on income;
- Guaranteed, standardized, comprehensive benefit plans with covered benefits that, at a minimum, are equivalent to the Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans;
- An option for people to "opt out" of any individual mandate of coverage unless the coverage meets the above affordability and comprehensiveness standards

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The letter to Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins and Representatives Chellie Pingree and Mike Michaud was signed by 22 Maine people, businesses and organizations. The list includes in no specific order, Consumers for Affordable Health Care, Maine State Employees Union/SEIU, Maine Council of Churches, Minority Health Program, Portland Public Health and Human Services, Western Maine Community Action Program, Maine Center for Economic Policy, Maine People's Alliance, MDI Imported Car Service, Inc., Avalon Group, Inc., Eastern Area Agency on Aging, Kennebec Valley Organization, Law Office of Alice Knapp, Maine Women's Lobby, Penquis Community Action Program, Maine Parent Federation, Maine Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse, New England Regional Council of Carpenters, MS Society of Maine, The Pond, Maine Council of Senior Citizens, Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center.

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.

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