

# The Small Business Coalition for Affordable Healthcare

[www.SmallBusinessHealthcareCoalition.com](http://www.SmallBusinessHealthcareCoalition.com)

February 4, 2009

Dear Chairwoman Velazquez and Ranking Member Graves:

On behalf of the **Small Business Coalition For Affordable Healthcare**, the nation's leading small business coalition dedicated to increasing access and affordability of health insurance for the small-business owners, their employees, the self-employed and their dependents, we are writing to express our strong desire to work together with lawmakers to construct meaningful healthcare solutions for our nation's job creators – small business.

America's small businesses play an essential role in our nation's economy. Small businesses employ half of all private sector employees and have generated 60 to 70 percent of net new jobs over the last decade.

Our country, this Congress and the Administration face many challenges – most significantly a slowing economy and growing financial insecurities. As Congress explores ways to rebuild and strengthen our economy, the Coalition urges lawmakers to be mindful that the cost of health insurance is one of the most critical economic issues facing small businesses – and for them it is both a healthcare issue and a pocketbook issue.

Health insurance remains one of the fastest growing and most unpredictable costs small employers face from year to year. For example, since 1999 health insurance costs for small firms have increased by 113 percent. Although small businesses cover nearly 68 million people through the employer-based system, still only about half can afford to even offer insurance. Those not offering health insurance cite cost as the primary explanation. Furthermore, the nation's smallest firms pay an average of 18 percent more in health insurance premiums for the same benefits than those in the largest firms.

The necessity for healthcare solutions tailored to the needs of the small business community cannot be overstated. Small businesses have struggled with this problem for years. We believe that in order to do something about coverage, something must be done about cost – the two are not mutually exclusive. Simply put, Congress *must* do something about costs – for the individual, the employee, the employer and the overall delivery system. That begins with transforming the broken marketplace of today into a system where private insurance is available and is built on quality, value, competition and, most of all, affordability.

Thank you for holding the first hearing of the year focusing on the unique needs and challenges facing the small business community. America's small businesses are the risk takers and job creators in our economy. But in the current economic environment, small businesses like the rest of the economy are struggling. The **Small Business Coalition for Affordable Healthcare** looks forward to working with all those in Congress and the new Administration who are dedicated to crafting meaningful solutions for small business during the healthcare reform debate.

Sincerely,

(see reverse for signing organizations)

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American Association of Advertising Agencies  
American Bakers Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Foundry Society  
American Hotel & Lodging Association  
American Institute of Architects  
American Rental Association  
American Society of Association Executives  
American Society of Home Inspectors  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Associated General Contractors of America  
Association of Ship Brokers & Agents  
Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association  
Automotive Recyclers Association  
Commercial Photographers International  
Computing Technology Industry Association  
Evidence Photographers International Council  
Independent Office Products & Furniture Dealers Association  
Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute  
International Franchise Association  
International Housewares Association  
Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association  
National Association of Computer Consultant Businesses  
National Association of Convenience Stores  
National Association of Home Builders  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Association of Mortgage Brokers  
National Association of Realtors  
National Association of Theatre Owners  
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors  
National Club Association  
National Federation of Independent Business  
National Funeral Directors Association  
National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association  
National Retail Federation  
National Newspaper Association  
National Restaurant Association  
National Roofing Contractors Association  
National Tooling and Machining Association  
Ohio Valley Automotive Aftermarket Association  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Printing Industries of America  
Precision Metalforming Association  
Professional Golfers' Association of America  
Professional Photographers of America  
Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades  
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council (SBE Council)  
Society of American Florists  
Society of Association Executives  
Specialty Equipment Market Association  
Student Photographic Society

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Textile Rental Services Association of America  
The Adhesive and Sealant Council, Inc.  
The Society of Sport and Event Photographers  
The Society of the Plastics Industry  
Tire Industry Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Wedding & Event Videographers Association International