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New Hampshire Small Business Owners Eager for Healthcare Reform

Research Shows Small Business Owners Willing to be Part of a Solution that Makes High-quality Healthcare Affordable and Available to All

CONCORD, NH – Recent research shows the majority of New Hampshire small business owners believe healthcare reform is necessary and are willing to be part of a solution that controls costs and guarantees coverage for everyone.

A state-wide, random survey of small business owners conducted by Small Business Majority, a leading national small business advocacy organization focused on healthcare reform, found that nearly two-thirds of the small business owners surveyed support the federal government reforming our health care system and 75 percent believe that healthcare reform is important to getting the economy back on track.

The survey also found that affordability is the primary obstacle for small business owners in obtaining health insurance. 84 percent of small businesses not offering health insurance say they can't afford to, while 76 percent of those who do are struggling to provide it. Small business owners also see the cost of health insurance as a significant barrier to entrepreneurship and say reform is important in helping the economy recover.

“Small business owners aren't shirking their responsibility where healthcare is concerned,” said John Arensmeyer, founder and chief executive officer of Small Business Majority. “They feel a responsibility to provide healthcare for their employees and are willing to do their part in fixing our broken system.”

The report found 75 percent of small business people support having the option of a private or public health insurance plan as part of healthcare reform. They also believe individuals, employers, insurers, the government and healthcare providers should share the responsibility for making coverage more affordable.

In addition, 63 percent of small business owners believe the federal government should have a role in achieving reform. 68 percent say they want to reform the current system by holding employers, individuals and the government responsible in making healthcare more affordable. In contrast, 8 percent want to replace the current system with government-provided healthcare and only 16 percent want to leave things as they are with no government involvement.

“Our company is a lot like a family. One of our responsibilities is to provide the best health insurance we can afford,” said Robert Gogolen, Owner, EMF Inc. “The company is obviously stronger having a healthy workforce with access to quality, affordable health care. The health insurance status quo puts that in jeopardy and, I believe, is not sustainable. I will do everything I can to continue to provide health coverage to our staff. But with costs rising like they are, if the system isn’t reformed soon, it may not be possible.”

Gogolen joined 200 other small business owners in New Hampshire earlier this month to create a newspaper ad highlighting the need for comprehensive health care reform to protect small businesses.

Additional findings in the report that emphasize small business concerns:

- 57% believe their company has a responsibility to provide health coverage for its employees.
- 86% of small businesses want to eliminate preexisting condition rules, and 73% see these rules as a barrier to starting a business.
- 50% believe that businesses that don’t offer health insurance should be required to pay something to cover their employees.

The full survey can be viewed here: <http://smallbusinessmajority.org/sbmresearch.php>

A copy of the ad can be viewed at:

<http://www.nhvoicesforhealth.org/WEBSITE%2009/documents/NHadULFINAL.pdf>

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About Small Business Majority

Small Business Majority conducts extensive scientific polling and research to determine small business owners’ perspectives on healthcare reform and brings a nonpartisan voice to policy discussions nationwide. Based in Sausalito, CA with offices in Washington, DC and New York City, the organization works with small business owners, healthcare policy experts and elected officials nationwide.

About NH Voices for Health

NH Voices for Health is a network of consumer and advocacy organizations and individuals allied in their commitment to securing quality, affordable health care for all in New Hampshire. The network represents over 200,000 members, consumers and constituents statewide who are motivated to help improve access to quality, affordable health care in New Hampshire. Funding for NH Voices for Health is provided in part by the Endowment for Health, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the Public Welfare Foundation.