

Contacts: Rebecca L. Gould, Executive Director, 402-440-7352
Jennifer Carter, 402-440-3776

SENATE HEALTH CARE PROPOSAL GOOD NEWS FOR NEBRASKA

Governor's Claims Ignore Realities Facing Nebraskans

Lincoln, NE - The following statement was issued by Rebecca L. Gould of the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest in response to Governor Heineman's claims regarding the Senate health care bill:

"The Governor's claims regarding the effect of the Senate health care reform bill on Nebraska not only rely on sweeping assumptions, but ignore the harsh realities facing Nebraska families. Premiums have gone up three times as fast as wages in the state. Left unchecked, it is estimated that premiums will be \$22,976 in 2016—a full 58 percent of projected family income in the state. About 12% of Nebraskans, or 220,000 people – at least 45,000 of them children – do not have health care coverage. We cannot forget the costs of doing nothing.

The health care bills under consideration would result in great benefits to Nebraska. Insurance reforms and tax credits will result in families not only accessing more affordable coverage, but getting better value for their premium dollar.

The Governor's analysis also ignores the realities facing the state without reform:

- Without reform, the number of uninsured Nebraskans would increase, increasing the burden of uncompensated care for hospitals and other health care providers. According to an analysis by researchers from the Urban Institute entitled "The Cost of Failure to Enact Health Reform: Implications for States," under the worst case scenario the number of uninsured people would increase by more than one-third between 2009 and 2019, and even under the best case scenario the number of uninsured would rise by 16%.
- An erosion in employer coverage would result in big increases in Medicaid and Kids Connection – under the worst case increases as high as 30% and under the best case increases of 18%.
- Without reform, states would have to deal with these increases **without the increased federal assistance** (equaling 90% of Medicaid costs for most states) **which states would get under health reform.**

The current system is not sustainable for our families, our businesses, our farmers, or for a prosperous future for our state. We cannot afford to wait to reform this broken system.

Nebraskans know this. And they deserve a vote on health care reform.

###

Nebraska Appleseed, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest law project, is a national leader in addressing social problems facing vulnerable children without loving and permanent homes, low-income families working hard to make ends meet, and new immigrants seeking a better life. Nebraska Appleseed's current year action plan and description of its six program areas, significant litigation and policy reform successes, and broad-based accomplishments can be found at neappleseed.org.

Nebraska Appleseed is a part of the Appleseed network of independent state-based public interest law centers working to identify and address social injustices. The Appleseed network seeks to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise by addressing root causes and producing practical, systemic solutions with broad implication. For more information visit appleseednetwork.org.

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest
941 O Street, Suite 920
Lincoln, NE 68508
www.neappleseed.org