

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 311

Approved June 25, 2009

WHEREAS, Cities are on frontlines of the healthcare crisis with high rates of un-insurance and rapidly escalating costs affecting residents, businesses, and workers; and

WHEREAS, City governments spend billions of dollars to provide health coverage to millions of employees, dependents, and retirees, and rising health costs affect cities' ability to provide other city services; and

WHEREAS, Cities face serious health workforce shortages, particularly among primary care professionals in low-income communities; and

WHEREAS, Many families and individuals served by city programs have unmet health and mental health needs, complicating city efforts to provide effective services; and

WHEREAS, City public health agencies receive limited federal and state support despite the cost-effectiveness of public health strategies in preventing and addressing chronic diseases; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 46 million Americans lack health insurance and are less likely than their insured counterparts to receive recommended preventative and screening services, or medicines and treatments that meet the professional standard, and are more likely to die prematurely; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 9 million children lack health insurance coverage and therefore have fewer well-child visits, worse access to specialists, fewer immunizations and more visits to the emergency room than children with health coverage; and

WHEREAS, Millions more Americans are underinsured and at risk of financial ruin if they experience a major illness; and

WHEREAS, Health care costs, and employment-based health insurance premiums in particular, have increased at rates much higher than inflation or wage growth for the last decade; and

WHEREAS, Health costs threaten the global competitiveness of American businesses; and

WHEREAS, Our current health care system focuses on treating disease rather than preventing it or promoting wellness; and

WHEREAS, There are large disparities in health status and health outcomes based on race, ethnicity, and physical ability, and many health care providers do not offer adequate service to patients with limited English proficiency or limited physical or mental ability; and

WHEREAS, Chronic diseases pose the greatest challenge to our health care system and our health care delivery system is not well-organized to prevent and treat them; and

WHEREAS, Public hospitals and clinics, community health centers, and other safety net providers provide care to millions of underserved individuals regardless of income, health coverage, or immigration status; and

WHEREAS, Many cities have developed innovative programs to expand access to quality health care, make health services more affordable, and improve health care quality while acknowledging that any comprehensive reform must be led by the federal government; and


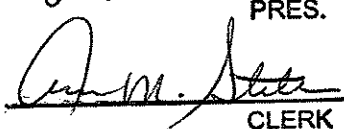
WHEREAS, Leaders in both political parties serving in Congress and the White House have called for enactment of comprehensive health care reform; and


WHEREAS, The President has pledged enactment of comprehensive reform this year, and substantial progress is being made in Congress to engage stakeholders and craft comprehensive reform; and

WHEREAS, Mayors, as representatives of their citizens, as employers, as health care providers and as partners to small and large businesses who struggle with health care costs, should have their voices heard in the crafting of comprehensive reform proposals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the U.S. Conference of Mayors supports and calls for the immediate enactment of the Administration's health care reform principles and agrees that comprehensive reform should reduce long-term growth of health care costs for businesses and government; protect families from bankruptcy or debt because of health care costs; guarantee choice of doctors and health plans; invest in prevention and wellness; improve patient safety and quality of care; assure affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans; maintain coverage when someone changes or loses a job; and end barriers to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress to support public hospitals and other providers in the health care safety net so that those who fall through the cracks of expanded health coverage may still receive care; so that surge capacity is available in case of public health emergencies; and so that the cultural competencies achieved by providers serving diverse populations are preserved and enhanced in a reformed health care system.

IN CITY COUNCIL
JUN 18 2009
READ AND PASSED

PRES.

CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR 6/25/09