

New York State's Crisis – Affordable Health Care

The Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: January 26, 2004
For more information, contact: Pamela Finch at
(315) 363-9657 or pamela.finch@verizon.net

Spending Increases, Business Anxiety Highlight the Need for Reform

A statement by Scott Miller, chairman of the Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care

This year marked the sixth consecutive year of double-digit health insurance premium increases. These increases continue to stretch the resources of small businesses and sole proprietors.

The December 30 issue of *Investors Business Daily* reported that in a survey of 1,000 Americans, 71 percent identified the rising cost of health care as a top personal concern for 2004. This fear surpassed inflation, the war in Iraq and having enough money to live properly. The Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care believes that lawmakers are long overdue in making health care affordable and accessible to everyone by eliminating the financial burden caused by unnecessary legislative mandates. Unless Albany changes the review process, the problem shows no sign of improving. The *New York Times* (January 9 edition) reported the largest increase in health care spending in 11 years - totaling \$1.55 trillion – and experts say that this trend will continue to hurt the uninsured.

Those who lobby in favor of specific mandates claim that they will provide equitable treatment for all. However, common sense dictates that legislative mandates can only benefit people who are already insured and will, in fact, harm individuals who lose their insurance because they can't afford to pay the higher premiums caused by mandates. If the present trend continues, I am afraid that we will see many more small business owners and sole proprietors forced to cancel their health insurance policies and they, and their employees, will join the ranks of the three million New Yorkers who are uninsured.

PO Box 1412 Albany, NY 12201-1412
Telephone: (315) 363-9657
Fax: (315) 363-9659

BECOME A CYBERACTIVIST!
www.employeralliance.com

The new year offers our state leaders a new opportunity to make health insurance affordable and accessible to a vital segment of our state's economy – sole proprietors and small businesses.

We urge lawmakers to consider a moratorium on the passage of any new health insurance mandates until they have a review process that evaluates the cost and efficacy of each mandate prior to passage. Such action will provide fiscal relief to employers and require minimal financial contributions from the state.

The Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care is a coalition of more than 1,200 New York State business owners representing more than 100,000 employees. With three million New York residents without health insurance, and 75 percent of these individuals working, our members believe that it's time for lawmakers to make health care affordable and accessible to everyone by eliminating the financial burden caused by unnecessary legislative mandates.

Scott Miller is an Amsterdam businessman and chairman of The Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care, the largest single-issue business coalition in New York State.