

Insurance Matters

Group Proposes Health Care Reforms

(NAPSA)—New proposals for health care reform may offer a prescription for savings—for both employers and employees.

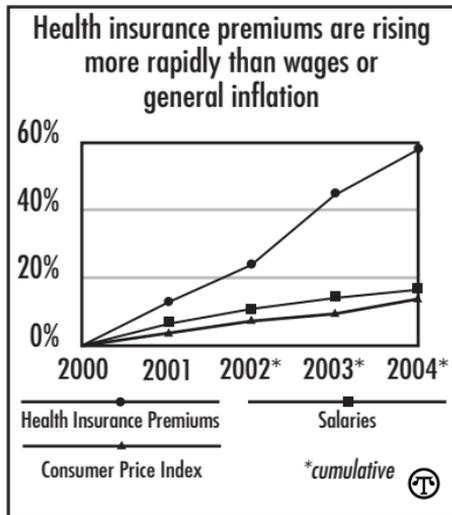
That's the word from an advocacy group that says that employers who provide health coverage now—and workers who receive it—would save money under any one of several scenarios proposed for systemwide health care reform.

The group noted that over the last four years, the cost of insurance premiums rose six times faster than the rate of inflation and nearly five times faster than salaries. For many workers, rapidly rising premiums are canceling wage increases. For many employers, controlling health insurance costs is becoming increasingly important.

According to projections by the National Coalition on Health Care, the costs of achieving health insurance for all would be more than offset by the savings in each of four possible scenarios they offer for reforming the health care system.

Moreover, under three of the health care reform scenarios, employers would save hundreds of billions of dollars, reaching \$195 billion in savings in year 10, and employees collectively would save at least \$40 billion in that year. The Coalition's projections also show that annual savings—systemwide and for the employer-employee components—would grow significantly each year after year 10.

The proposed scenarios for reform include expanding public programs such as Medicare, using employer mandates, creating new programs targeted at uninsured populations, or establishing a uni-



versal, publicly financed system. All scenarios contain similar and specific measures to better manage health care costs and improve the quality of care.

“While a great deal of attention over the last few months has been focused on Social Security reform, the crisis in health care is a far larger and more immediate problem than Social Security, and as such is the central domestic problem facing America—adversely affecting living standards, job creation and retention, the adequacy and viability of pensions, and the competitiveness of American firms in global markets,” said Henry E. Simmons, M.D., president of the Coalition.

The National Coalition on Health Care is described as the nation's largest nonpartisan, non-profit alliance of groups working for comprehensive health care reform.

Copies of the reports on possible reforms can be obtained by visiting the Coalition's Web site (www.nchc.org) or by calling 202-638-7151.