

Dear NAHU Members,

It's important that we let Congress know what we are concerned about relative to comprehensive health reform, but it's just as important to let them know what bills we support. So this week our grassroots focus will be on obtaining co-sponsors for the [Healthy Workforce Act](#) which targets small to mid-size companies that might otherwise struggle with the initial investment in programs, offers a tax credit to businesses that offer comprehensive wellness programs to their employees. The bill encourages companies to offer comprehensive wellness programs to their employees by creating tax incentives. As you know, lifestyle choices and unhealthy behaviors which lead to many preventable medical conditions are responsible for a significant portion of the nation's health care costs. Encouraging companies to offer wellness programs, which have been proven to help reduce health care premiums, not only works to lower the cost of health care but more importantly strives to improve the health of all Americans.

The measure was introduced in the Senate as S. 803 on April 2 by Senator Harkin (D-IA) and Senator Cornyn (R-TX) and in the House as H.R. 1897 by Representatives Blumenauer (D-OR) and Bono (R-CA). We are asking you today to send messages to your members of Congress today asking them to cosponsor! Please go to the following link to send a message to all of your Congressional representatives, and once you are finished, please direct your clients and any other concerned Americans you may know to the link.

Thank you!

I am writing today to ask you to considering co-sponsoring the Healthy Workforce Act, which was introduced recently in the Senate as S. 803 by Senator Harkin (D-IA) and Senator Cornyn (R-TX) and in the House as H.R. 1897 by Representatives Blumenauer (D-OR) and Bono (R-CA). This important measure would create a tax credit for businesses that offer comprehensive wellness programs to their employees. Encouraging companies to offer a variety of wellness programs as a benefit to their employees not only improves the health of Americans but also helps to lower the costs of health care.

Unhealthy behaviors and lifestyle choices are two key factors in the increased cost of health care. Over 50 percent of America's annual health care costs can be attributed to individual behaviors such as smoking, alcohol abuse, and obesity. Rising health care costs not only affect individual consumers but employers as well. Average health care costs for employers have increased over 70 percent between 2000 and 2006.

Wellness programs that encourage families to adopt healthier lifestyle and prevent chronic illness are important elements of cost-reduction efforts. Studies have shown that companies who invest in wellness programs will see a proven rate of return within 12 to

18 months, ranging from \$2 to \$10 on each dollar invested. Wellness programs do more than just reduce the costs of health care, they help Americans achieve a greater level of health.

S. 803/H.R. 1897, which targets small to mid-size companies that might otherwise struggle with the initial investment in programs, offers a tax credit to businesses that offer comprehensive wellness programs to their employees. These programs include health education, behavioral change programs that encourage employees to lead healthy lifestyles through seminars and counseling, as well as creating a supportive environment to encourage employee participation in workplace wellness programs.

I strongly encourage you to lend your support to the Healthy Workforce Act and to consider co-signing this legislation. Not only does the bill aim to help lower the increasing cost of health care that burdens many families and companies in America, but most importantly works to make America healthier. Investing in programs designed to educate employees on wellness will help all Americans make smarter decisions in regards to their health and develop healthier lifestyles.