



**Consumers for
AFFORDABLE
Health Care**

*Advocating the right to health care
for every man, woman and child.*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June, 10, 2008

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Maine Consumer Health Group Applauds IRS Hospital Crack Down

Maine's largest consumer health coalition, Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC), is commending the Internal Revenue Service for recent changes it made to laws regarding non-profit hospital tax reporting. CAHC joined thousands of others nationwide in sending a letter to the IRS applauding it for creating these new reporting standards (Schedule H of form 990). We also made recommendations to make the law even better.

The IRS is now requiring non-profit hospitals to show proof of the amount of charitable care and benefits they actually provide to their communities. With non-profit hospitals making up about 77% of all private community hospitals nationally, and 100% of those in Maine, this law change is crucial. Non-profit hospitals are required to give care to anyone regardless of insurance status and without expecting payment. They are given \$12.6 billion a year in tax breaks to provide this needed care. While many hospitals give quality care and follow the rules, there are some that do not.

This is especially important to Americans and Mainers right now as primary care providers are becoming more difficult to find and fewer people are able to afford health coverage or out of pocket health care expenses with the rising costs. While these law changes are not going to cure all that ails the broken health care system in this country, it will give a better gauge as to the health care we are receiving in our communities. Only when our hospitals and insurance companies are more transparent and accountable to the people about their billing and spending will people start getting the quality and affordable health care everyone needs.

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"Health care should be a right, not a privilege."