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Three New Alarming Studies Released on Health Care

Three new studies show that Americans and Mainers are at risk due to huge flaws in our health care system. The studies done independently by the Center for Studying Health System Change, Kaiser Family Foundation, and The Commonwealth Fund prove if something isn't done soon to nurse our system back to health, it will be the working middle and lower classes that suffer the most.

Findings:

- **1 of 5 Americans has not been able to get medical care they needed in the past year.***
- That amounts to **23 million people going without needed medical care** and 36 million more having to wait longer than they should to get care. *
- **1 in 4 Americans is struggling with health care costs. ****
- About half the people in the country are concerned about what they're paying out of pocket for health care. But, only 19% are concerned about what the government spends on health care. **
- Most voters, regardless of political party, believe health care should be provided to everyone with shared costs between people, government, and businesses.**
- **25 million Americans are underinsured.** They have insurance, but still have medical expenses insurance won't pay for so are left with medical bills they cannot afford.***
- The **number of underinsured Americans has risen 60%** since 2003, with rates tripling among middle class families. ***
- Add that to the number of uninsured people in this country and that leaves **42 percent of our entire adult population younger than 65 without adequate health coverage. *****

CAHC Conclusion:

We are facing an epidemic. Access to needed medical care should not be a privilege. Americans, even insured Americans, can't get the care they need. The cost to our country, our communities, and our families is increasingly unbearable. There are also hidden costs. When working families can't get the medical services they need the result is a less productive workforce. More people are working jobs they don't like in order to keep health coverage. More people are staying sick longer. More people are having small health issues turn into large ones because they can't afford the care they need. Meanwhile, insurance companies are making record profits. The largest insurer in Maine, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, made over \$75 million in profits in 2007 in Maine alone. All of this information underscores the need for a health care plan that offers quality affordable health coverage to every man, woman and child. The plan would have to include cost sharing between individuals and businesses based on their incomes, something these studies show Americans support. It would have to include comprehensive benefits to cover the treatments recommended by family doctors. Insurance companies should no longer be allowed to deny medically necessary treatments recommended by our doctors who know best. Americans need a system that is predictable and they can count on. As these studies show, the inadequacies in our health care system are only letting insurance companies and big business get richer, while it's leading to a sicker, poorer working class Maine and America.

*According to Center for Studying Health Care System Change
** According to Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008
*** According to The Commonwealth Fund

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