



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 9, 2009

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## **Mainers Saying, "No Way!" to Anthem Rate Hike Request**

(Augusta) At a time when Maine people are struggling more than ever to pay their most basic bills like food and water, as Maine's largest consumer health coalition, we find it unconscionable that Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield wants yet another double digit insurance rate hike. Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC) collectively represents about 200,000 Maine people. Many of them are telling us, this latest rate hike could be their undoing.

"This rate increase would up my premiums to almost \$1000 a month," says Carol Coffin of Thorndike. "I think it's absolutely insane, unethical and inhumane to request a rate increase in these times when people are already struggling to put food on the table, clothe themselves and pay for medications."

Anthem is asking the Superintendent of Insurance to allow them to charge an average of 18% more for their HealthChoice and Lumenos insurance products. They are asking for more than a 9% increase on some products and up to nearly a 38% increase on other products. These increases will affect more than 12,000 Maine policyholders like Carol Coffin.

Anthem profits grew at astronomical rates in Maine from about \$20 million in 2001 all the way up to \$75 million in 2007. They made nearly \$51 million in profits for 2008. (You can view Anthem rate report here: [http://www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance/consumer/excel/2008\\_rule\\_945/Anthem\\_Final\\_Rule945.xls](http://www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance/consumer/excel/2008_rule_945/Anthem_Final_Rule945.xls)) We want to see the proof that this latest rate hike request is to cover the cost of health care and not to line CEO's pockets.

"The last time Anthem was awarded double digit increases they claimed the sky was falling as well and the next year their profits doubled. Before hard working Maine families are squeezed for more money, we should ensure it is to pay for actual health care costs and not fatter Anthem purses. In this tough economy, we need to prevent Maine people from losing coverage. If these rate hikes are granted, the opposite will happen," says CAHC Government Affairs Director, Doug Clopp.

Health Care Consumers are speaking out at the upcoming public hearings listed below that are being held by the Superintendent of Insurance. Superintendent, Mila Kofman, will decide after these hearings whether to approve Anthem's request.

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**Public Hearings:**

**Portland**

March 10, 2009

5:00 p.m.

Talbot Lecture Hall, Luther Bonney Hall

University of Southern Maine

**Gardiner**

March 12, 2009

9:00 a.m.

Central Conference Room

Dept. of Professional & Financial Regulation

122 Northern Avenue

Please join us at one of the above hearings, because Maine people and small businesses are already paying some of the highest health care costs in the country. We can't afford to pay for more record profits.

People who can't attend the hearings but still want their opinion heard can email comments to Consumers for Affordable Health Care at [dclopp@mainecahc.org](mailto:dclopp@mainecahc.org). We will make sure they are read at one of the hearings. They can also email Superintendent Mila Kofman directly.

Consumers for Affordable Health Care is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that has been helping Maine people get quality, affordable health care for more than 20 years.

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**For more information or to schedule interviews contact:**

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