



NATIONAL HEALTH COUNCIL

# NEWS

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## **48 Patient Group CEOs Call for Health and Long-Term Care Coverage for Every American**

### ***Statement Calls on Candidates to Propose Specific Policy Solutions***

NASHUA, N.H., Sept. 6 — Today the nation's leading patient groups released a statement signed by 48 CEOs that calls on the 2008 presidential candidates to propose specific solutions that guarantee effective and affordable health and long-term care coverage for all Americans.

This effort represents the first time that the nation's leading patient groups — charitable organizations that represent people with a chronic disease or disability — have joined forces in support of improving health coverage for all Americans.

"We're facing a grave crisis that demands immediate action," said Easter Seals Chief Executive Officer Jim Williams. "Many are at risk — especially the 100 million Americans we represent," said Williams, who also serves as chair of the National Health Council. "We hope not only to educate candidates, but compel them to act on this vital issue.

Approximately 500,000 New Hampshire residents suffer from at least one of the five most common chronic conditions. In addition, nearly 32.5 percent of residents (approximately 400,000 people), report suffering from a physical or emotional disability that limits activity or requires the use of special equipment such as a cane, wheelchair or special bed.

For many of these residents, obtaining effective health and long-term care coverage is difficult, if not impossible. In addition to those unable to obtain coverage, many New Hampshire residents are underinsured or have reached the lifetime cap, effectively ending the care they can receive.

The National Health Council, founded in 1920, is leading the effort to educate presidential candidates and the media about the importance of ensuring that all Americans have coverage. It is joined in this effort by the Alzheimer's Association, Easter Seals and nearly 50 other patient groups that comprise its membership.

"We can no longer sit on the sidelines and remain quiet when so many of the people we represent are suffering," Williams said. "This problem has been brewing for years. Candidates, the media and the public at large must understand that we cannot wait any longer."

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*The National Health Council is a private, nonprofit organization of 115 national health-related organizations working to bring quality health care to all people. Its core membership includes more than 50 of the nation's leading voluntary health agencies representing approximately 100 million people with chronic diseases and/or disabilities. Other Council members include professional and membership associations, nonprofit organizations with an interest in health, and major pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. The Council serves as a place for diverse health-related groups to build consensus with a focus on patients and their needs.*

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