

The Otsego County Chamber

Strengthening Our Economy  Shaping Our Future

Media Release

MANDATES NOW EQUAL 14.2% OF PREMIUMS BUSINESS COMMUNITY CALLS FOR MORATORIUM ON HEALTH INSURANCE MANDATES

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ALBANY – *The Otsego County Chamber* has taken a stand in behalf of more than 500,000 businesses in New York State in calling on lawmakers to place a moratorium on any new health insurance mandates, until work on the Health Care Quality and Cost Containment Commission is complete.

The Chamber joined with a dozen other business organizations in sending a message to lawmakers that they must stop contributing to high health insurance costs. Health insurance mandates are laws that require insurance companies to include specific treatments and services in the basic health care package. These mandates incrementally drive up cost and right now, comprise 14.2% of the total premiums.

"Both houses of the legislature and Governor's office signed off on an agreed to process for studying and discussing health care mandates. It is time for the current leadership to live by the agreement, and let that deliberate process work!" stated Rob Robinson, President & CEO of *The Otsego County Chamber*.

"This joint effort is in direct response to the double-digit premium hikes that continue to plague our members and make health insurance a necessity that fewer are able to afford," Robinson continued. "Despite recent movement in federal health care reform, the state government is forging ahead, introducing nearly 90 new mandates that will expand coverage for a few individuals and make the overall insurance product even more expensive and less accessible."

“The Employer Alliance has long decried the impact of health insurance mandates,” said Pamela Reese Finch, Executive Director of the Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care. “At the same time New York State decries the 17% average increases experienced by most small businesses this year, legislators have yet to follow through on implementing the Health Care Quality and Cost Containment Commission.”

The commission, established in 2007, will study mandate proposals and their long-term impact, providing critical cost-analysis information to key decision-makers prior to passage. “Rather than complaining about the problem, we need State Legislators to become a pro-active part of the solution,” said Reese Finch. “It is not necessary to re-invent the wheel – funding and legislation are approved. It’s now just matter of getting the commission seated and allowing it to do the job.”

Other organizations making this request to the lawmakers were: the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce, The Business Council of New York State, Inc., The Employer Alliance for Affordable Health Care, The Fulton County Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Main Street Small Business Coalition, the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, New York Farm Bureau, the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association, Orange County Chamber of Commerce, Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce, *The Otsego County Chamber* and the Rockland Business Association.