

The Health Care Crisis Needs a Permanent Cure

We've had enough of talking about the health care crisis—it's time for action.

- Rising costs are putting health care out of reach for more and more working families—and putting employers who provide health care at an unfair competitive disadvantage.
- In 2006, employer health insurance premiums increased by 7.7 percent—twice the rate of inflation. Since 2000, health insurance premiums have risen 78 percent.
- Employers who pay for health coverage for their employees are forced to compete by cutting wages or shifting costs to workers. The average worker with health care coverage paid 143 percent more for premiums between 2000 and 2005.
- For LIUNA members, this has meant a severe curb on wage gains—it is estimated that more than half of all pay increases won at the bargaining table now go towards health care cost increases.

In the richest country on Earth, 47 million people are without health insurance—and nearly 1 in 5 are children.

- Of the 47 million Americans without health care coverage, 8.3 million are children.
- Due to soaring health care and prescription drug costs, families are having to make choices that no one who works for a living should have to make—choices between treatment and medication or paying for other necessary items like heating, food or gas.
- Unlike LIUNA members, who are fortunate to have access to health care, most construction workers have no health care insurance, despite working in one of the most dangerous occupations.

A comprehensive cure for the health care crisis in America must be a top priority for our elected leaders.

- Everyone should have access to quality affordable health care, without exclusions or discrimination against those with pre-existing conditions, health status, age, race or ethnicity.
- Coverage should be portable and everyone should have a choice of doctors and other health care providers.
- Reducing waste, improving efficiencies, curbing excess profits, and focusing on preventive care can help rein in health care inflation.
- Until there is a comprehensive solution to the health care crisis, any reform efforts should not undermine those with existing coverage or further punish employers who provide coverage.