

HEALTH CARE FOR MASSACHUSETTS CAMPAIGN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Constitutional Amendment Campaign applauds historic reforms as a major step toward health care coverage for every resident

April 3, 2006 (BOSTON, MA) — Today, Senate President Travaglini, House Speaker DiMasi, and other leaders of this state made enormous progress in the effort to address our health care crisis and the fight to get affordable coverage for every Massachusetts resident. As the Senate President made clear, there is still more to do. The job won't be complete until every resident has access to affordable, comprehensive, fairly funded coverage for medically necessary health and mental health care and that vision becomes a reality through laws enacted by the Legislature.

The Health Care Constitutional Amendment, currently before the Legislature for a second and final approval before going to the voters in November 2006, will make sure the job gets done. It makes the Legislature, the Governor and the voters jointly responsible for enacting the laws needed to ensure every resident access to affordable, comprehensive and equitably financed coverage for medically necessary health and mental health care services, prescription drugs and devices. It will also ensure that today's historic reforms serve as a foundation for the work ahead, maintaining the momentum for reform so crucial to protecting the health and welfare of the Commonwealth's residents and the vitality of our economy.

On May 10th the Constitutional Convention reconvenes and the almost 120 organizations that have endorsed the measure are looking forward to a second approval by 50 legislators. With that approval, the voters will have the opportunity to make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to guarantee all its residents access to affordable, comprehensive coverage. The Legislature voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Amendment by a vote of 153 to 41 in the 2004 Constitutional Convention.

The Health Care Amendment will require the Commonwealth to find a way to guarantee every Massachusetts resident access to affordable coverage for medically necessary health and mental health care services including prescription drugs and devices. However, it does not tell the Legislature *how* to achieve this goal. Once the Legislature has, with stakeholder input, developed a concrete plan that meets all the Amendment's standards, it will be submitted to the voters for their final approval.

The text of the Health Care Amendment reads:

Upon ratification of this amendment and thereafter, it shall be the obligation and duty of the Legislature and executive officials, on behalf of the Commonwealth, to enact and implement such laws, subject to approval by the voters at a state wide election, as will ensure that no Massachusetts resident lacks comprehensive, affordable, and equitably financed health insurance coverage for all medically necessary preventive, acute and chronic health care and mental health care services, prescription drugs and devices.

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Paid for by The Committee for Health Care for Massachusetts