

## Providing Hope for the Uninsured:

### *The President Touts Health Savings Accounts In His 2006 State of the Union Address*

By *Richard J. Monello*

*The healthcare crisis is one that affects and concerns most Americans. With politicians on both sides of the spectrum discussing and debating the issue, the public is hungry for answers to this growing situation.*

**President George W. Bush** has been touting Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) as a possible solution to the problem and continues to do so. In his 2006 State of the Union Address, Bush announced HSAs as part of his plan to set the country back on the right path. "We will strengthen Health Savings Accounts, making sure individuals and small business employees can buy insurance with the same advantages that people working for big businesses now get," says Bush. "We will do more to make this coverage portable," he says.

So, how deep into a healthcare crisis are we? A recent report by the Census Bureau revealed that a recent spike in the number of Americans without healthcare coverage. In fact, 45.8 million Americans have no insurance of any type. The reason for most is that they simply cannot afford any kind of coverage. Attempts to provide universal coverage or cause significant changes through federal mandates have failed. These disturbing figures from the Census Bureau should serve as a call to action for government policymakers as well as health care companies. We need to work together and formulate a plan that will help get access to affordable health care for all Americans. Fortunately, solutions are on the horizon.

According to the Bush administration, the solution would be moving healthcare toward new association-based health plans, including HSAs and consumer-driven health plans. "To make insurance more affordable, Congress must act to address rapidly rising health care costs," says President Bush. "Small businesses should be able to band together and negotiate for lower insurance rates so they can cover more workers with health insurance—I urge you to pass association health plans."

The use of association-based health plans is finally starting to catch on. These plans offer solutions for those who previously thought themselves to be "uninsurable." A small but increasing number of people are taking a look at these affordable plans. Some of these plans include a myriad of choices and benefits for its members. Membership in one of these plans allows members access to hospital indemnity benefits, prescription benefits, and disability benefits. It also carries provisions for medical, dental, accident, and vision care. It even includes several lifestyle benefits including road side service, travel benefits, and discounts on shopping, dining, and movies.

These association health plans are products whose time has come. These plans are true blanket guaranteed acceptance benefit packages. Many people with pre-existing conditions are worried about being accepted into new plans. The good news is that many of these association health plans accept everyone, even those with pre-existing conditions.

These new health plans, in addition to being great for consumers, are also beneficial for agents and brokers, especially for those agents looking to strengthen their portfolio and provide healthcare coverage to the uninsurable. There is finally a solution that will address their growing databases of uninsured Americans and that will pay them a level commission for the life of the plan.

Thanks to these one-of-a-kind products, you don't have to tell anyone "no" anymore. At last, the 45.8 million uninsurable Americans have some options.

It's about time.

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