

HEALTHCARE POLICY

Access to affordable health insurance is a major challenge for American employers and their employees. It is important to consider the direct and indirect costs that large and small businesses and individuals must bear. Similarly the concerns of temporary, permanent, and contract employees need to be considered. Concern over the escalating cost of health care has given rise to a system that inappropriately overshadows and often stifles the ability of industries and individuals to succeed, innovate, pursue entrepreneurship or other career or business options, or even retire.

The American Chemical Society (ACS) believes that the ability to maintain the health of the nation's workforce and its families is paramount in maintaining America's global competitiveness.

The members of ACS are in a unique position to comment on the healthcare debate, not only as consumers, but as key participants in the nation's health care system. Our members are professionally and actively involved in:

- Drug discovery and development
- Diagnostics
- Monitoring food, water and environment
- Materials for medical and health applications
- Education including health and wellness
- Workforce training

Preserving the innovation, creativity, and institutional knowledge that reside in the modern American pharmaceutical and chemical industries needs to be an important underlying concern of any healthcare reform legislation. The future health of the nation and the world rests within this system. Yet the environment surrounding healthcare must change to encourage entrepreneurial businesses and individuals to make choices that are based on the ability to contribute, grow and succeed, and not on the availability or lack of an affordable healthcare plan.

To that end, the ACS encourages the consideration of the following points in any federal legislation regarding healthcare:

- Prevention—incentives to practice wellness, safety and preventive care that collectively lower healthcare costs
- Availability and affordability—choice of affordable health plans, including visits to doctors, related services, wellness plans and prescription medicines
- Eligibility—universal eligibility, regardless of any pre-existing conditions
- Portability—ability to move across state lines and between employers without interruption or loss of coverage
- Privacy—protection of medical information including genetic data

The American Chemical Society (ACS) Board of Directors Committee on Public Affairs and Public Relations adopted this statement on behalf of the Society at the recommendation of the Committee on Economic and Professional Affairs. ACS is a non-profit scientific and educational organization, chartered by Congress, with more than 158,000 chemical scientists and engineers as members. The world's largest scientific society, ACS advances the chemical enterprise, increases public awareness of chemistry, and brings its expertise to state and national matters.

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