



Health Access AMERICA

Bringing a New Approach to the Health Coverage Challenge

The rising number of uninsured Americans represents the most important health care issue facing our nation today. A high number of Americans without health insurance affects national productivity, the health of our society, our health care infrastructure and the cost of health care for everyone.

Why a Campaign?

Action on this issue is essential, both on the public policy front, as well as helping people better understand and access existing health coverage options. Although the number of uninsured Americans is rising, there is no persistent, year-long national effort to press for action in Washington, or to link individuals and families with existing private and public coverage options.

The Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) is well positioned to lead a nationwide health coverage campaign by virtue of its:

- ★ Diverse membership representing all health sectors
- ★ Proven coalition-building and management expertise
- ★ Experience working with the uninsured.

HLC initiated its first *Health Access America* campaign in 2001 and made a major impact, with research that changed public understanding regarding the face of the uninsured (HLC-commissioned research discovered that eight of every 10 uninsured Americans live in a wage-earning household.) and an Honor Roll for Coverage award program that has spotlighted innovative regional health coverage programs throughout the U.S.

Why Now?

There is an acute need for action and solutions, as the impact of the uninsured issue is increasingly felt in our health care system, our economy and our society. It is time to re-engage *Health Access America* – this time forming a broader coalition of groups with the resources available to both impact public policy and provide much-needed information to the millions of uninsured Americans through a concentrated, grassroots approach.

Health Access America will advocate bipartisan public policy measures that will increase the accessibility of private health coverage and improve the efficacy of existing public programs. The campaign's message will be two-fold:

- 1.** The problem of the uninsured affects all Americans and must be addressed.
- 2.** Private and public coverage options are available for a significant number of the uninsured. A proactive effort is essential to ensure that as many people as possible are linked with these plans and programs.

What Would the Campaign Do?

Utilizing the combined resources of campaign members and the HLC-managed infrastructure, *Health Access America* will increase public awareness about the value of insurance and opportunities for coverage through:

Grassroots Community Outreach:

- ★ Hosting informational forums on health coverage options through presentations to Rotary Clubs, workplace “lunch and learn” sessions, etc.
- ★ Creating a speakers’ bureau to educate small business owners and their employees about available coverage options.
- ★ Providing young adults with information on how to shop for coverage and what to keep in mind when evaluating employer-provided coverage.
- ★ Orchestrating local enrollment events nationwide for targeted populations in community health centers, schools, workplaces, job fairs, grocery stores, places of worship, and more.

Advocacy and Education:

- ★ Coordinating research, education activities and grassroots activism to communicate to lawmakers the importance of proactive policymaking on the uninsured issue.
- ★ Advocating an agenda that would include both private coverage proposals (i.e., tax credits), as well as enhancements to existing public programs (i.e., State Children’s Health Insurance Program).
- ★ Developing teams of health providers, employers and affinity group leaders to maintain a dialogue with members of Congress through Capitol Hill forums and other events.

Earned Media:

- ★ Conducting print, television, radio and online media outreach to ensure there is a continuing drumbeat on the uninsured and potential solutions that warrant discussion.
- ★ Submitting op-eds and letters to the editor as well as meeting with the editorial boards of major-market newspapers.
- ★ Maximizing visibility at the local level by placing articles in coalition members’ newsletters, local senior publications and faith-based community weekly bulletins.

Research and Polling:

- ★ Conducting studies on the various reasons for uninsurance among target populations, as well as studies to examine the feasibility of various proposals aimed at addressing the uninsured challenge.
- ★ Polling the business community and consumers to better understand the issue (i.e., surveying small business owners to analyze the obstacles that prevent them from ensuring employees).

A Demonstrated Track Record

HLC has managed a number of campaigns structured similarly to *Health Access America*, including the *Alliance to Improve Medicare* and the *Confidentiality Coalition*. Most recently, HLC administered *Medicare Today* – an initiative that brought together 400+ organizations, 80 paid community organizers and more than 175,000 volunteers to conduct thousands of enrollment events in communities nationwide. The effort generated 500+ million media impressions and succeeded in linking millions of Medicare beneficiaries with the program’s new drug benefit.

Partner Benefits

Involvement in the *Health Access America* campaign offers numerous benefits including the opportunity to have an expanded and influential voice in the shaping of health coverage policy, as well as visible sponsorship opportunities at *Health Access America* enrollment events throughout the country.

For more information about *Health Access America*, contact the Healthcare Leadership Council at 202-452-8700.