

2008 Health Care Position Statement

The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and GBIC believe that:

1. Vermont's long-term goal should be to stabilize escalating health care costs;
2. Vermont must develop a plan for the long-term, sustainable financing of our existing health care programs before we expand current offerings;
3. Vermont must refrain from any additional cost-shifting onto the private sector to fund current or expanded services.

Priorities:

- Improve the efficiency of the administration of Vermont's public health care programs with a goal of capturing a 2%-5% production efficiency in real dollars; reinvest every dollar captured through efficiencies in public health care programs into provider reimbursement in order to reduce the cost shift.
- Continue to fund the Blueprint for Health and other programs that will improve long-term health access outcomes and cost reduction.
- Ensure the continuation of the Global Commitment.
- Promote wellness, prevention and chronic disease management.

Strategies to Meet These Priorities:

- Vermont's Global Commitment Waiver is subject to renegotiation in 2010. With twenty-five percent of Vermonters receiving a benefit through the Office of Vermont Health Access (OVHA) and OVHA budget of more than \$800 million annually, an outside review should be conducted in order to apply business efficiency models to the production aspects of public health care programs, ensure that all funds due to the State are collected and that the maximum federal dollars are drawn down. As little as 2 to 5% savings would realize significant funds, that could in turn be used to reduce the Medicaid cost shift.
- Improve education and create opportunities for Vermonters to create advanced directives and promote the use of the online directives registry.
- Nursing home costs represent a large proportion of total Medicaid spending for a small number of patients. Optimize long term care options, for Vermont's aging population, that can increase quality and reduce costs.
- Review the efficiency of our health care systems in order to identify gaps and surpluses in resource allocation.
- Incentivize wellness and chronic care management for Medicaid beneficiaries
- Continue to support Pay for Quality reimbursement programs for physicians in Vermont that address chronic disease prevention
- Increase opportunities for consumers to make informed decisions about care by comparing costs and quality.
- Explore ways to incentivize and promote long-term care insurance coverage.

Guiding Principles:

- Fully fund existing programs in a sustainable manner prior to expanding programs or coverage.
- Continue to fund the Blueprint for Health in order to expand chronic care management and increase access to preventative and pro-active health care.
- Increase efficiency and reduce duplication of services through the use of information technology. Electronic medical records should be in use statewide.
- Ensure the sustainability of Green Mountain Care through full funding that does not increase the employer assessment. Expansions to the program should not be considered until the Medicaid cost shift is eliminated.
- Ensure that merging of insurance pools does not negatively impact the insurance rates for certain groups in order to lower rates for others.
- Continue to promote education and wellness through public campaigns, government, schools and workplaces. Reward businesses that provide employees with access to wellness programs and support chronic disease management.

Approved by the Board of Directors of the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce on November 12, 2008 GBIC Executive Committee on November 10, 2008.