

# **Why create a Tennessee Health Care Study Commission?**

**SB2046 (Tracy) / HB1976 (Hensley, Curtiss, J. DeBerry, Mumpower, M. Turner)**

## **1 in 6 Tennesseans Uninsured**

- One in six Tennesseans are uninsured.
- Nearly as many are under-insured, meaning they have some sort of health insurance, but it does not cover their needs; therefore, they are paying large out-of-pocket costs for premiums, deductibles, co-pays, and non-covered services. The result is that many are not getting adequate care and many are going into medical debt.

## **State spending more and covering less**

In 2004, Tennessee had 600,000 uninsured and was spending about \$2 billion in state funds on public health care. Today, we have one million uninsured and are spending nearly \$3 billion in state funds on public health care. (Sources: US Census and Bureau of TennCare)

## **State admits Cover Tennessee "not adequate"**

- The state has attempted a solution, but Comm. Goetz told the House Budget Committee on April 11, 2007 that Cover Tennessee was "*not adequate to what everyone needs out there.*"
- With 1 in 6 Tennesseans without access to affordable, quality health care, the commissioner cited the current numbers of people covered under the four main Cover Tennessee programs: Access TN, 858; Cover TN, 48; Cover Kids, 100; and Cover Rx, 20,000 (program frozen now).
- The state's own best-case-scenario numbers estimates that by 2009-10 the Cover Tennessee programs combined will only cover 132,000 people. Meanwhile, we have 1 million uninsured and growing.

## **Tennessee needs to keep up**

Health care reform remains a hot topic with the public. For several years, health care has polled as a top concern of Tennesseans and Americans, and will likely continue to be a hot topic throughout the 2008 presidential race. Few, however, are expecting comprehensive national solutions anytime soon. Real action for improvement is happening and will continue to occur at the state level.

Several state legislatures are acting to do what's best the citizens they serve. The National Conference of State Legislators reports: *several states--including Illinois, Colorado, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, New Mexico and Washington—have commissions charged with creating recommendations for expanding coverage and reforming health care. Political leadership in other states including California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Ohio, Oregon, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Wisconsin are poised to act in 2007.*

## **A comprehensive, Tennessee solution**

- The establishment of a Tennessee Health Care Study Commission would not seek to duplicate what another state is doing; it would seek a comprehensive solution that's right for Tennessee.
- The 21-member commission would be made up of seven (7) people from each Grand Division and would include all stakeholders, such as health care professionals and consumers.
- It would seek out and deliver a set of recommendations for solutions that Tennessee's General Assembly would develop and enact for affordable, continuous, quality health care to every adult and child.

***Now, more than ever, Tennessee needs leadership for the future.  
Please support the creation of a Tennessee Health Care Study Commission.  
SB2046 / HB1976***