

# HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

## PRESS RELEASE

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## RALLY AGAINST ANTHEM

Frustrated by Maine's health care crisis, dozens of Mainers gathered at Anthem's offices in Augusta today to speak out against the rising premiums and increasing profits of Maine's largest health insurance company and to support federal reforms, including a public health care option.

"People all over Maine are struggling to afford quality health care coverage, and some are dying without it," said State Representative Brian Bolduc, one of two Maine legislators speaking at the rally. "We need real reform in Washington to make sure quality health care is accessible to everyone."

Health insurance premiums in Maine increased nearly 90% from 2002 to 2007, 5.4 times faster than the median income. During this time, Anthem controlled 50%-90% of the state's individual and small group insurance market. These hikes forced many Mainers to drop or reduce their health insurance coverage.

Virgil Bozeman, Pastor of the South Parish Congregational Church in Augusta, argued that health insurance company practices are fundamentally unfair.

"The Golden Rule teaches us that we should do unto others as we would have them, do unto us," said Bozeman "It's important that we bring fairness back into health care and that's why we need a public option."

Bozeman asked for a moment of silence for those who have lost their lives due to a lack of health insurance.

Debra Violette, a cancer survivor and state chair for the Lung Cancer Alliance described how her insurance company questioned and delayed nearly every test and treatment she was prescribed during her fight with the disease.

"We need to be able to access health care in a timely fashion and not be weighed down by insurance bureaucrats looking for loopholes to deny health care benefits," said Violette. "Wouldn't you think that fighting for your life was more than enough for one person to deal with?"

The importance of Senators Snowe and Collins in enacting federal health care reform was a constant theme throughout the event. Participants spoke out against the idea of a "trigger" mechanism that would delay the implementation of a public plan and give health insurance companies another chance to offer affordable care.

"For the first time in decades, we have a real chance to make sure everyone in America has access to quality health care," said Gen Lysen, an Organizer for the Maine People's Alliance. "For-profit insurance companies have consistently failed to deliver adequate health care. It's time Maine people had an affordable, public choice."

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*Health Care for America Now - the nation's largest health care campaign - is made up of more than 1000 organizations representing more than 30 million people nationwide. President Obama and more than 190 Members of Congress support HCAN's principles for health care reform. All across the country, HCAN supporters are organized and mobilized to stress the urgent need for health care reform in 2009, reform that finally puts health care needs before insurance company profits.*