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ABC for Health: Health Reform & the Influence of Money

Madison, WI – Will real and meaningful health care reform be delayed until we crack the undue influence of money and politics? “Health reform has stalled due to the harmful influence of special interest money,” said Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and director of ABC for Health. “I can think of a hundred-million reasons why health reform is slow,” adds Michael McCabe, Director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. “The industries that want to keep things the way they are—insurance and pharmaceutical conglomerates—have given over \$100 million in 2008 alone to candidates in federal office. They have a huge ownership stake...giving them leverage in health care issues,” adds McCabe.

On September 9, ABC for Health filmed a new edition of its popular, online policy talk show, the *HealthWatch Watchdog*, with special guest Michael McCabe. Peterson and McCabe discussed the impact of campaign contributions on the health care reform debate. McCabe continues, “What amazes me, contributors to state or federal campaigns amount to 1% of the population. A tiny sliver of the population is bankrolling campaigns, giving them an amplified voice on issues.”

ABC for Health presented their HealthWatch WatchDog presentation from the ABC for Health Studio. The web cast is available to the media and the public at this link: <http://76.205.39.193/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=ee10a4bf-7532-4984-83fd-e5af47edaea7>

Peterson continues, “Our democratic principles are challenged by big money. Health reform is a text book example of the corrosive effect that a lot of money can have on policy initiatives favored by a majority of Americans.” McCabe concludes, “There are three legs to the stool—campaign contributions, lobbying and the extreme advertising and propaganda that result in billions of dollars, with a huge impact on the health care debate. The most important thing to achieve health care reform is to enact the National Fair Elections Now bill.”

ABC for Health is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health’s mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services. www.abcforhealth.org

