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**PRESS RELEASE
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ABC for Health: The Eve of Reform?

Madison, WI – “Health care reform has divided America since the Roosevelt administration—that would be Teddy Roosevelt,” said Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and director of ABC for Health. On March 18, ABC for Health filmed an edition of its popular, online policy talk show, the HealthWatch WatchDog. “No issue has such potential for improvement; no issue can so devastate the future for so many Americans as health reform.” Today, in the middle of a week designated as “Cover the Uninsured Week,” we are closer than ever to meaningful reform for generations of Americans. Peterson states, “The lack of reform continues to stymie Americans as they stumble through the maze of private coverage and public programs that should help people but leaves over 48 million uninsured. Questions still resonate across our state and country: ‘What happens if I lose my job? When can I retire? How will I pay for health insurance...if I can even get it? How will I help my children when they go to college or graduate?’”

Peterson presented more perspectives on may be the eve of national health reform in a web cast presentation from the ABC for Health Studio available to the media and the public at this link: <http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=8fafd33d0f0343afb0cc04840e267970>

The need for health insurance reform crosses many lines of income, race, gender, and yes, political parties. The Democrats, dazed for weeks by the lack of a super majority in the Senate and no semblance of a consensus in the House, seem finally poised to move ahead with health reform. Despite the howls of foul play from Republicans over use of reconciliation rule to pass reform, the simple truth remains that the majority shall rule. In fact, these same reconciliation rules applied to the “Reagan Revolution” that never had 60 Senators, Clinton’s Welfare Reform, the Bush tax cuts, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

Health reform infuriates and frightens the “fat cats” afraid of being the “biggest losers” in this political and philosophical battle. The same shrill cries of socialized medicine and government takeover greeted the original Medicare and Medicaid programs in 1964. Now these programs are entrenched in the bedrock of widespread and popular support and a clear majority of voters would never stand for a repeal of either program. Democrats must recognize a broad





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constituency that waits for courageous political leadership to vote for reform. Many of the same constituents who voted for leaders to extend health care coverage to more people will vigorously resist any misguided attempts to repeal reforms.

“On the eve of potential reform, Wisconsin is in better shape than most states, but we can do better,” continues Peterson. “Reform would secure much needed federal resources to expand Medicaid and develop health exchanges to promote pooling of enrollees that will help unify administrative costs and increase purchasing leverage to lower costs.”

Now, we need action and political leadership. Peterson concludes, “The bumbling and bungling mantras of health care reform have gone on long enough. Yes, some misguided souls will make some noise; and yes, some health care profiteers will need to find new jobs, but reform will move Wisconsin and America forward. The path ahead will not be easy, but we elect our legislators to lead us to a better place—where all have the security of health care coverage that we need and deserve. We must demand action that leads to comprehensive quality and accessible health care for all Americans.”

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.

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