

(May 4, 2006) LIPINSKI TAKES LEADING ROLE IN "COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK"

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Lipinski and other Democrats work to provide health care to the 46 million uninsured Americans

WASHINGTON, DC - As part of "Cover the Uninsured Week," Congressman Dan Lipinski joined other House Democrats in speaking out for the 46 million Americans who do not have health insurance. This number has increased by 6 million people since 2000.

"It is indefensible that there are 46 million Americans without health insurance," stated Congressman Lipinski. "The current administration has failed to provide affordable health care options for these people, choosing instead to stand by as the number of uninsured Americans has increased. In Illinois alone, the number of uninsured grew by 88,000 people between 2000 and 2004. We in Congress have an immediate obligation to address this growing problem."

Congressman Lipinski has supported key legislation that would make health insurance affordable and available for more Americans. He is the lead cosponsor of H.R. 765, the Fair Care for the Uninsured Act, which would provide individuals a refundable tax credit for the purchase of private health insurance for their families. Congressman Lipinski also introduced H.R. 3139, the Hospital Price Reporting Disclosure Act, which would require hospitals to report the prices they charge for certain services and drugs, as was seen in a recent 60 Minutes. The uninsured are vulnerable to surprising hospital bills because hospitals do not make their prices known. Greater price transparency will allow consumers to make better decisions and provide incentive for hospitals to keep their prices down.

"Millions of working, uninsured Americans go to bed every night worrying what will happen to them and their families if a major illness or injury strikes. At the same time, millions of insured Americans are paying increased health insurance premiums to cover the health care costs of those who are uninsured," stated Congressman Lipinski. "Legislation such as H.R. 3139 and H.R. 765 will save Americans money by lowering hospital prices and helping to provide insurance coverage to those who need it."

Congressman Lipinski has also supported legislation that would make health insurance more affordable to small businesses. More than 60% of the working uninsured are either self-employed or work in a firm with fewer than 100 employees. H.R. 525, the Small Business Health Fairness Act, addresses this critical problem and authorizes the creation of association health plans (AHPs). AHPs permit small employers to band together to purchase health insurance, giving small employers the same bargaining power as large employers and thereby greatly reducing the cost burden of health insurance on small businesses.

"I am proud to support H.R. 525. Due to the skyrocketing costs of insurance premiums, many small business owners are far less likely than before to provide health insurance for workers and their dependents. This bill gives small businesses the bargaining power they need to offer their employees affordable health insurance."