

## **Laid-off? 3 Ways to Reduce Your Health Coverage Costs**

### **Health Care Think Tank Estimates Family of 4 Could Save Up to 75% per Month on Premiums by Utilizing Stimulus-Generated Options**

**San Jose, Calif. – June 15, 2009** –With up to 2 million Americans predicted to be laid off in 2009, it's critical that those at risk of losing their medical coverage become aware of available alternatives within the current public as well as private sponsored insurance system. The nonprofit Foundation for Health Coverage Education has created three options to consider for recently laid-off employees to review. The purpose is to make them aware of stimulus package-generated options as well existing government sponsored programs and private industry initiatives they may now qualify for. Combined, these programs could save a family of 4 up to 75% a month on health insurance premiums.

“The fear of losing health coverage in today’s economy is real but shouldn’t be overwhelming,” said Phil Leberz, FHCE executive director/founder. “By reviewing new COBRA eligibility rules, checking on eligibility for public programs for children under 19 and visiting websites for organizations that help lower drug costs, there may be stop-gap measures in place to help families keep their coverage.”

- 1. Reducing Premium Costs by 65% through new COBRA rules** - On average nationally, unemployment benefits are \$1,278 a month while COBRA premiums for family coverage average \$1,069 a month. Under federal law, businesses with 20 or more employees are required to provide involuntarily terminated employees continuation of group health coverage. With the new rules, workers who were involuntarily terminated from September 1, 2008 through the end of 2009 and were previously insured are eligible for government assistance in paying premiums covering 65% of the cost of continuing a worker’s health insurance, leaving only 35% of the original premium to be paid by the worker themselves, a substantial savings.

**2. Comprehensive Children's Insurance You May Qualify For Now**

FHCE has made signing children up for state insurance coverage programs simple and user-friendly. A visitor can go to [www.coverageforall.org](http://www.coverageforall.org) and take the 5 Question Eligibility Quiz to begin the process. For those who prefer a live, one-on-one help line, the U.S. Uninsured Help Line (800-234-1317) provides 24/7 multilingual help with live, trained specialists.

**3. Saving Money On Name Brand Pharmaceuticals**

Prescribed medications are expensive. There are, however, programs available from pharmaceutical manufacturers, state assistance programs and nonprofit groups that can help pay for prescription drugs. Checking drug company sites for specific medications or patient advocacy sites for eligibility for cost-saving programs and medicines. These sites include TogetherRXaccess, [www.togetherrxaccess.com](http://www.togetherrxaccess.com) RxAssist, [www.rxassist.org](http://www.rxassist.org) and Partnership for Prescription Assistance, [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org) to name a few .

The Foundation for Health Coverage Education, [www.coverageforall.org](http://www.coverageforall.org), has centralized information about COBRA and public programs available in all 50 states and captured, on a single Web site.

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