



### Reform the Country's Healthcare System

Healthy hometowns make for a healthy America. But today, America's local governments face fundamental challenges as they strive to protect and improve the health of city employees and the citizens they serve. Like most businesses in the country, cities and towns are finding that their budgets are overstretched by the ever-increasing costs of providing health care coverage to employees and their families. In addition, cities face the much more basic challenge of trying to make sure all residents stay healthy.

#### Message to Congress

- *Local governments are one of the largest employers in the country.* Millions of Americans work for the nation's cities and towns. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Labor reported 86 percent of local governments offered health care benefits to employees and their dependents, contributing, on average, 91 percent of the cost of premiums for individuals and 73 percent of the costs for family coverage.
- *The rate of growth for healthcare costs has far outpaced inflation and GDP growth.* According to a report issued by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research and Education Trust, in the past 10 years, the average premium for employer-sponsored health insurance has increased 119 percent, growing from \$5,791 for a family in 1999 to \$12,680 in 2008.
- *Helping to ensure access to quality affordable healthcare is a priority for communities across the country.* In the United States, 46 million people currently live without health insurance. Many individuals and families are not receiving the care they need to live healthy and productive lives.
- *The current healthcare system does not promote a culture of health and physical well-being.* People do not receive adequate disease prevention services, including annual checkups for children. The lack of preventive care, in turn, means children and adults are more prone to chronic diseases. As these and other problems worsen, morbidity and mortality rates will rise, and the general health of American communities will deteriorate, posing problems not just for cities and towns but for the entire nation.

#### Request to Congress

- **Reform** the health care system in a manner that controls the rising costs of health insurance and ensures that every American has access to adequate care.