

# **INSIDE: your 2007 activist report\***

\* What happened with health care in the Legislature this year, and what it means for you

**[www.SaveHealthCareInWA.org](http://www.SaveHealthCareInWA.org)**

A NON-PROFIT GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE IN WASHINGTON STATE

Paid for by Save Health Care in  
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2007 activist report [www.SaveHealthCareInWA.org](http://www.SaveHealthCareInWA.org)



\* Historic victory for Washington State's children...but uninsured adults still lack relief



"It is fantastic that every child in Washington State will have access to affordable health care coverage. They are our future and are currently some of our most vulnerable citizens."

— Michelle, Edmonds



"This is a very important issue to me. One reason is I believe all children deserve the best health care and it will help them to reduce missing so much school."

— Sandra, Kenmore

"We docs on the front lines and the families we care for all thank you for your courage and vision. We won't forget this historic decision. Thanks for this investment in the future of our families and communities."

— David,  
Health Care Professional,  
Bainbridge



"Your efforts this year on behalf of the children of this state have been profound and are much appreciated. Please continue your good work toward preventive health care for all, regardless of their ability to pay."

— Jerret, Seattle



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# Because you spoke out for affordable health care in 2007, every Washington child can now get the coverage they need. How cool is that?

Dear Save Health Care in Washington Activist,

Congratulations for making Washington a healthier state. You joined thousands of Save Health Care in Washington activists in sending a record number of messages to legislators, demanding the Legislature "Get health coverage up!" For children, the year was historic. Yet that victory was tempered by few comprehensive solutions to provide coverage for the hundreds of thousands of uninsured adults in our state.

#### EVERY WASHINGTON CHILD ENSURED ACCESS TO COVERAGE

At the beginning of this year, 73,000 kids lacked health coverage in our state. When historic legislation goes into effect this summer, it will reduce that number by nearly 70% by bringing health coverage within reach for up to 50,000 children! The legislation uses cost-effective programs that have been proven to improve the health of children. Taxpayers will save money in the long run, and our children will be healthier and more successful in school. The legislation:

- Provides comprehensive and affordable coverage options to all children in our state.
- Ensures that children will be able to see a health care provider and establish a medical home.
- Invests in outreach to find and enroll eligible kids.
- Declares goals for nutrition and exercise in schools.

#### BASIC HEALTH EXPANDED BY 3,000 NEW SLOTS

Washington voters approved a tobacco tax to expand the Basic Health program five years ago. Until now, the Legislature has been collecting the tax, but refusing to use the money to fully fund Basic Health — and it's driven up costs for everyone. The new slots provided this legislative session will not fully fund Basic Health, but they will make the program available to 3,000 more uninsured adults in Washington who have no other affordable options.

#### SOME PROGRESS ON DENTAL COVERAGE

The Legislature expanded, by six dentists, the Northwest Dental Residency Program, which supports dentistry in under-served communities. They also invested in the Medicaid dental program for children and adults, including root canal treatments. While these are vital steps, too many adults will continue to struggle to afford essential dental services.

#### FUNDING PROTECTED FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Community health centers are a crucial part of our state's health care safety net. They provide affordable, cost-effective primary medical and dental care across the state, and improve the physical, social and fiscal health of our communities.

*\* Much work is left to find relief for uninsured adults.*

"It is unbelievable that after five years of collecting the money for Basic Health, the state is blatantly using the money elsewhere. Where is the accountability to constituents?"

— Michelle, Puyallup



"My husband and I have had Basic Health for over five years now. We would be bankrupt and have lost our house otherwise over health problems..." — Susan, Seattle



"You got it for the kids, now let's get the adults covered, too!"

— Merrillyn, Bremerton



"We already pay the price for having uninsured individuals in our state. Expand Basic Health and allow individuals to take responsibility. The savings will come in decreased costs of Hospital emergency departments for routine health care. Basic Health provides access to preventive health care. It's the right thing to do."

— Tom, Spokane

"I work two jobs and go to college. I'm in my 40s and so is my husband. In September he went to the emergency room and needed open heart surgery. He had no insurance. He has had several other surgeries since. Help! Almost homeless." — Renee, Port Orchard



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## Hundreds of thousands of Washington's adults still lack health coverage...the numbers will only grow larger as costs creep higher.

It's a vicious cycle, and it's eating away at our quality of life in Washington.

Rising health care costs have caused more people in our state to lose health coverage. Yet when more people lose coverage, costs creep up for everyone — both insured and uninsured. The higher the costs, the more people who are put in medical and financial jeopardy. The greater the crisis, the fewer resources available to address other challenges — like resources for schools, growing jobs and our economy, and protecting our communities — to name just a few.

Reckless budget cuts in the early part of this decade caused the health care safety net to begin unraveling. At the beginning of this year, nearly 600,000 people were without health care coverage in Washington State — enough to fill eight Seahawks stadiums to the rim. Most of the uninsured are working adults.

*How do we get out of this mess?*

There's no simple answer, but the historic legislation to cover all of our state's children is an example of the kind of bold and innovative action we need.

Some answers involve solutions we've already had success with. For example, right now more than 350,000 adults in our state are eligible for coverage through the Basic Health program. Basic Health is highly cost-effective, and it encourages personal responsibility, as enrollees must contribute to the cost of their care. But even with this year's additional 3,000 new slots, Basic Health doesn't help nearly as many people as it could if we fully funded it.

Other answers will need to address chronic problems in our health care system at large, including:

- More businesses are dropping health benefits every year. How can we make sure that people who work and pay taxes get access to affordable care without driving employers out of business?
- Tackle inefficiencies and gaps in the health care system at large, including streamlining access to medical records, eliminating bureaucratic hurdles, improving outreach, focusing resources on cost-effective primary care, and ensuring an adequate supply of primary care providers.

One thing is for certain: It will take a shared effort by everyone in our state to solve this problem. We simply can't afford not to.

**\* Washington is still recovering from years of reckless budget cuts**

"Congratulations once again on giving the people of Washington a strong voice for the cause of affordable health care."  
 — State Representative Bill Fromhold

"Citizen input on policy shouldn't begin and end on Election Day. Your organization plays a vital role in keeping the people of Washington engaged on this critical issue."  
 — State Senator Chris Marr

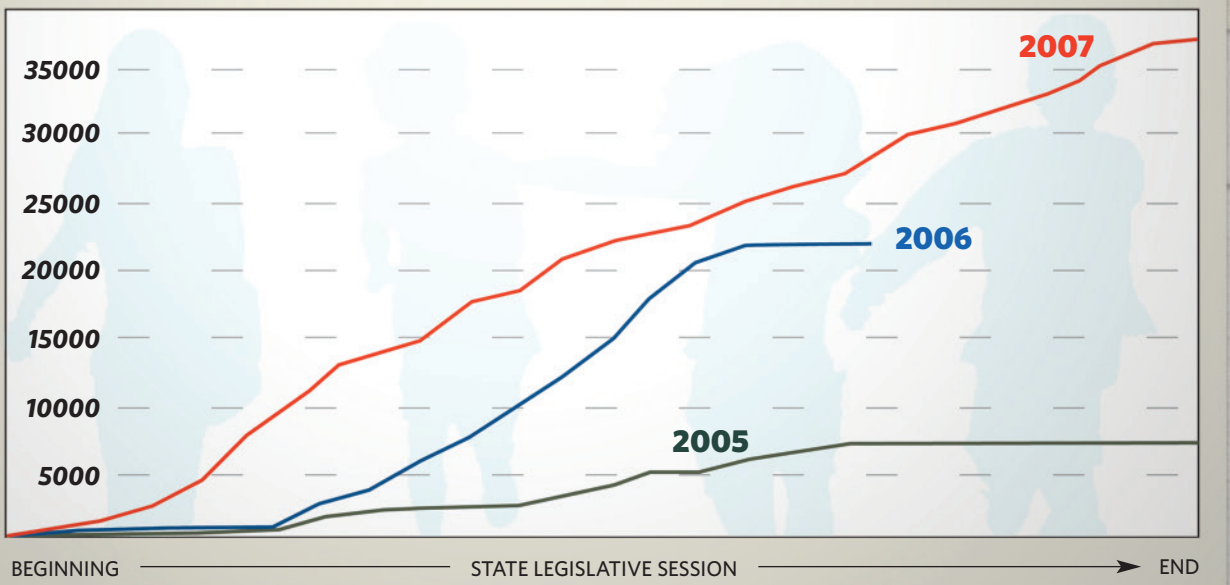
"We really appreciate the partnership and the fact that you are behind us — we are standing on your shoulders to get this all done."  
 — State Representative Dawn Morrell

"With all the phone calls and cards coming in, the other legislators see them and then they come to us [as health care committee members] to ask questions and find out what we are doing...so this is a day of congratulations for all of you, too."  
 — State Representative Tami Green

"If we ever needed a reminder that action on health care should be at the top of the list, that ever-growing pile of Save Health Care in Washington postcards left no doubt."  
 — State Representative Timm Ormsby



NUMBER OF ACTIVISTS SENDING MESSAGES THROUGH SAVE HEALTH CARE IN WASHINGTON



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To expand affordable health care we need to increase the number of voices calling for it. That's where you come in — you make Olympia listen.

Just read the quotes from legislative leaders on the opposite page — by making your voice heard, you made them listen.

While the 2007 legislative session left much work undone for affordable health care, its successes are proof that citizen advocacy continues to make a huge difference by influencing key leaders in state government. Since 2003, Save Health Care in Washington activists have sent more than 250,000 messages to Olympia, and each year we've seen more progress — both in counteracting cuts made at the beginning of the decade and in truly expanding access to coverage and affordable health care for the people of Washington.

Again, much work is left — particularly for Washington's uninsured adults. In the coming year, Save Health Care in Washington will continue to advocate to "get health coverage up!"

*Our success will continue to depend on maintaining a loud and clear voice for change. If you know of someone who would like to add their voice to the cause for affordable health care, please invite them to sign up today.*

Thanks to you and every Save Health Care in Washington activist for continuing to support affordable health care in Washington.



\* Help us add more voices to the call for affordable health care: Send a friend to [www.SaveHealthCareInWA.org](http://www.SaveHealthCareInWA.org) today