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## **New Census Bureau Report on Uninsured Heightens Need for Action on Accessible Health Coverage**

### ***Evidence Shows Uninsured Numbers Could Be Reduced Through Better Outreach, Use of Existing Programs***

WASHINGTON – Today's U.S. Census Bureau report showing an increase in the number of uninsured individuals further underscores the need for policy action to make health coverage more accessible for working Americans, said the president of the Healthcare Leadership Council, but it also reminds us that we need to do more with already-existing public and private health coverage resources.

"Having tens of millions of Americans without health insurance is unacceptable. Policymakers in Washington should have no greater domestic priority than improving the efficacy of public health programs and bringing private health coverage within the reach of more working families," said HLC president Mary R. Grealy. The Healthcare Leadership Council is a coalition of chief executives of the nation's leading health care companies and organizations.

But, Ms. Grealy said, the nation doesn't need to wait for action from Congress to start reducing the uninsured population. A significant number of uninsured Americans can be linked with viable health coverage options through better outreach and education.

Earlier this year, the Healthcare Leadership Council launched a pilot project called *Health Access America* in seven U.S. cities – Cleveland, Las Vegas, Corpus Christi, Baton Rouge, Nashville, Columbia, SC and Saginaw, MI. In these cities, organizers have enlisted the help of churches, civic organizations, schools and health care providers in reaching out to uninsured citizens and inviting them to health coverage information events. Since the beginning of 2007, over 26,000 people have attended these events and nearly half have enrolled in either a public health coverage program or a private health insurance plan.

"We have commissioned polling research showing that a majority of uninsured Americans don't know where to turn for information about health insurance," Ms. Grealy said. "We shouldn't wait for federal legislation to start taking action on this critical issue. We're demonstrating that outreach and education can make a substantial difference."

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