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## ***Cover the Uninsured Week* Should Be Used to Emphasize Policy Actions, Outreach Initiatives to Link More People with Health Coverage**

WASHINGTON – *Cover the Uninsured Week*, which continues through May 3, presents an opportunity on steps that can and should be taken today to link uninsured Americans with existing health coverage resources, the president of the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) said today.

“The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (which created and sponsors *Cover the Uninsured Week*) deserves the nation’s thanks for spotlighting the difficulties faced by Americans without health insurance,” said HLC president Mary R. Grealy. “This week reminds us that we need to be addressing the uninsured crisis not just during these seven days, but every day of the year. Not only do we need action on the health policy front to make coverage more accessible to working families and individuals, but we also need resolve in our communities to connect uninsured Americans with the existing resources that can give them vital health care protection.”

The Healthcare Leadership Council, a coalition of chief executives of the nation’s leading health care companies and organizations, is a *Cover the Uninsured Week* partner. HLC has also been conducting a pilot program called *Health Access America*, which involves building coalitions of community groups in nine test cities throughout the country and hosting health coverage informational and enrollment events to provide uninsured citizens with information on public programs and affordable private coverage options.

Through its *Health Access America* program, HLC has organized over 1,000 health coverage events in New Mexico, North Carolina, Michigan, Texas, Tennessee, Louisiana, Ohio, Nevada and South Carolina, attracting over 33,000 attendees and more than 16,000 previously uninsured individuals who now have some form of private or public health coverage. Another *Health Access America* program is now being developed in Delaware.

“Public opinion research tells us that a majority of uninsured Americans don’t know where to turn for reliable information about health coverage options,” said Ms. Grealy. “While we need action on the public policy front to help more Americans afford private health insurance, we’ve clearly demonstrated that we can make a significant difference in reducing the uninsured rolls if we provided more people with information on how to acquire the health coverage they need.”