

Comments by Kelly Conklin
Small Business Owner, NJ Main Street Alliance
The Right Rx for New Jersey, October 8, 2009

I am here today as both a founding member of the NJPP Board of Trustees and as a small business owner in New Jersey for over 30 years. Last year I was asked to join a fledgling organization: The Main Street Alliance, a coalition of small businesses organized across New Jersey and 17 other states to bring a new voice to the policy debate in both state capitols and Washington DC. Small business owners through The Main Street Alliance now speak for themselves and the message is clear on health care. We need reform, we need it now and it must be adequately funded, accessible to the largest number of people, affordable and transparent. The House Bill “America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009” (H.R.3200) does just that and Ray Castro’s analysis explains how.

This latest New Jersey Policy Perspective report is a primer on Health Care Reform and should be read by anyone interested the issue. Moreover this report, like previous New Jersey Policy Perspective Reports is based on clear, understandable analysis drawn from the numbers and facts, absent of hyperbole, fear mongering, and ulterior political motives. The report explains the underlying realities and effects of a fractured, dysfunctional and inefficient system on economic development in New Jersey. Read this report and one thing is crystal clear: failure to reform will hobble business growth not only in New Jersey but across the country.

The report accurately describes the obstacles most New Jersey small business owners face: doing right by their employees in providing reliable, affordable health insurance. Ray succinctly quantifies our plight and that of our employees as we struggle to meet escalating costs, paying more and getting less. The report articulates the absolute requirement that any solution that purports to act in the interest of small business must include a fully funded national public health insurance option to contain premium costs and expand availability. The report explains in clear understandable language the facts behind the logic of mandated coverage, again an essential component of real reform.

Finally this latest work by New Jersey Policy Perspective should remind us all of the importance of this organization and the work it does. Once again careful fact based analysis has clarified a critical policy debate. Because NJPP has taken the time to produce a high quality product we are better able to understand and participate in the shaping of an important policy that will affect us all. If you want to understand health care reform in America today, read this report.