

**Senator Evan Bayh**  
**Brief Remarks to Citizens' Health Care Working Group Community**  
**Discussion**  
**March 11, 2006**

Thank you for participating in this very important effort to find common-sense solutions to the problems facing our health care system. As you all know, the challenges are real. Virtually every day, I hear from Hoosiers who are struggling with the spiraling cost of prescription drugs, trying to make ends meet for their families or businesses in the face of rapidly increasing premiums, or simply unable to afford health insurance at all.

Around the country, rising health care costs are making it increasingly difficult for hard-working individuals, families, and businesses – especially small businesses – to afford adequate health insurance. Since 2000, the number of uninsured has risen by over 5 million – it is now 45 million and growing. In 2004, employer sponsored group plans cost on average \$3,695 per year for individual coverage and \$9,950 for family coverage. The employee's share of a family premium averaged \$2,661, an increase of about \$1,000 since 2000.

We must take action now, on a bipartisan basis, to enact sensible health care reforms to slow the growth in health costs and improve the availability and quality of health care services. Again, thank you for your participation in this crucial process. I look forward to learning your thoughts on what steps we can take to improve our health system, and pledge that I will continue my efforts in the United States Senate to increase access to affordable, quality health care.