

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF INSURANCE LEGISLATORS

Resolution in Support of Extending Dependent Health Benefits for Young Adults

Adopted by the NCOIL Health, Long-Term Care & Health Retirement Issues Committee on July 11, 2008, and the Executive Committee on July 13, 2008.

Sponsored by Rep. Susan Westrom (KY)

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the number of Americans without health insurance in 2006 increased to more than 47 million people—representing a five percent increase from 2005; and

WHEREAS, health insurance premiums continue to increase at more than double the rate increases for inflation or wages; and

WHEREAS, 30 percent of adults between the ages of 19 and 29, or more than 13 million individuals, are uninsured even though they generally are among the least expensive to insure; and

WHEREAS, health insurance markets thrive when low-cost and low-claims individuals participate and purchase insurance policies because it decreases the cost of insuring older or less healthy individuals; and

WHEREAS, at least 20 states have enacted legislation to expand dependent health benefits to young adults beyond the traditional cut-off age of 19, and in two cases up to the age of 30; and

WHEREAS, many states extended the eligible age for dependent health benefits only for full-time students; and

WHEREAS, millions of young adults choose to enter the workforce immediately following high school graduation, forgoing secondary education opportunities; and

WHEREAS, college graduates may enter the workforce in entry-level positions with employers who may not offer health insurance benefits, or whose benefits require a substantial contribution from employees; and

WHEREAS, recent college graduates, as well as high school graduates who decide against or cannot pursue secondary education, lose eligibility for health insurance through their parents' plans; and

WHEREAS, by increasing dependent health benefits to individuals up to age 25, millions more young adults would be protected by insurance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) supports the extension of existing dependent health insurance benefits to individuals up to age 25, regardless of student status, and encourages states to enact legislation presenting master policy holders with an option to purchase such extended benefits for young individuals;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution shall be sent to state legislative leaders across the country and in the Congress.