

Vermont Survey: Small Businesses Need Healthcare Reform

The current system forces the state's small businesses to reduce coverage.

Some 57% of small businesses surveyed offer health insurance, and nearly all say the premiums have risen over the past several years.

In response to rising costs:

- 48% of those offering health insurance have changed to high-deductible plans, which require employees to pay premiums and satisfy a hefty deductible before receiving any coverage.
- 27% have increased employee contributions
- 26% have reduced benefits
- 16% have dropped plans altogether

Vermont small businesses see healthcare as a need and a responsibility.

Asked about their reasons for offering health insurance, small businesses most frequently cited these considerations as extremely important or very important:

- Need insurance for self: 78%
- Feel we have a responsibility to offer it: 73%
- Helps attract good employees: 65%

Small businesses want access to Catamount Health.

The new comprehensive insurance plan available to uninsured Vermonters is not open to small businesses—but they'd like it to be.

- 80% of those not currently offering any health coverage benefit would consider enrolling in the plan.
- 60% of those already offering insurance would look at switching to Catamount.

Affordability is key: For these businesses to consider enrolling, premiums would have to be less than \$400 a month per individual for 82% of those that don't offer insurance and for 64% of those that do.

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About this research: The survey of a random sample of 400 Vermont small businesses (compiled by Dun & Bradstreet) was conducted for AARP by Woelfel Research Inc. in March and April 2008. The margin of error is +/- 4.9%.