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# U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – December 9, 2008 Contact: J.P. Fielder 202 463 5682

## **U.S. Chamber Hails Study Exposing Unfair Shift in Health Care Costs**

*Josten Calls on Congress to Address Underpayments of Medicare, Medicaid*

**WASHINGTON, DC**— The U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Executive Vice President for Government Affairs R. Bruce Josten issued the following statement today, commending a study by Milliman, Inc that addresses the unfair health care cost shift from government to workers as a result of Medicare and Medicaid not adequately reimbursing providers for their services:

“As businesses struggle to continue to provide affordable health insurance to their employees, they are faced with skyrocketing premiums that rise at a much higher rate than inflation. The fact that the government is paying significantly lower rates has led to higher costs for private payers. This ‘hidden tax’ can cost a family of four about \$1,512 annually.

“As Congress looks at comprehensive health care reform, they must address the problem of underpayments for Medicare and Medicaid by being more responsible purchasers of health coverage. That includes having fair payment policies that don’t shift costs to private payers. Before expanding eligibility for any program, the government must first ensure the current programs are working.

“Congress is also failing to meet their responsibilities by allowing 11 million individuals, including 6 million children, fall through the cracks. These men, women, and children are already eligible for free or highly-subsidized insurance, but need assistance to enroll. Before expanding eligibility, the government must make it a priority to enroll those who already qualify for these programs.”

The U.S. Chamber is the world’s largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region.

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