



For Immediate Release

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Businesses: Fixing Broken Health Care System Needs to be Top of the Agenda at First Debate

From COVID-19 to failures of the employer-based system, businesses are looking for answers and leadership on health care.

PHILADELPHIA, PA - Business leaders and CEOs are looking for solutions on how the country can combat the Coronavirus, jumpstart a fragile economy, and fix a broken health care system during the upcoming debate this week between President Trump and former Vice-President Biden.

With the country hitting the grim milestone of 200,000 Coronavirus deaths this month, business leaders paint a picture of a country - and an economy - desperate for leadership. Members of **Business Leaders for Health Care Transformation (BLHCT)** say the lack of a national strategy to combat the Coronavirus creates additional uncertainty and challenges for the business community and struggling families who have lost paychecks and health insurance benefits to furloughs and lay-offs.

“Uncertainty is a killer in business and our country is facing a mountain of uncertainty right now,” said **Daniel Barlow, BLHCT executive director**. “Millions of people have lost their health insurance and millions more are still unemployed. When Trump and Biden face-off this week, our members hope they will recognize the importance of addressing health care head-on, including how to combat the Coronavirus and bring affordable and high quality health care to all Americans.”

Joe Sanberg, co-founder of Aspiration Inc. in California:

“This deadly pandemic and it’s ensuing job losses has revealed how senseless our current healthcare system is. Millions lost their jobs because of a public health crisis, which also meant they lost their health coverage at the very time they needed medical

care most. It's time for our leaders to understand how desperately we need to end the employer-based model of healthcare in America.”

Richard Master, CEO of MCS Industries in Pennsylvania, and chairman of BLHCT:

“The [recent RAND study](#) revealed how ineffective commercial health insurers have been in controlling the cost of healthcare for the 150 million plus American workers and the families they cover,. These inefficient middlemen pay an average of 2 ½ times more than Medicare and other government insurance programs for the same services at the same hospitals in the US. Further, they “gum up” the healthcare supply chain, interfering with the doctor patient relationship and creating reams of paperwork and senseless reports and communications. It costs an unconscionable \$15 an hour at my company just to insure an employee with a family. A public option made available to all employers run by Medicare with pricing negotiated by Medicare is what is needed to turn this runaway price crisis in U.S. healthcare.”

Jen Kimmich, co-founder of The Alchemist in Vermont:

“Our small business has faced many challenges during COVID-19, from sales losses, supply chain disruptions, sending employees to work from home, supporting families working while supporting their children with remote learning, and more. But the biggest challenge and threat to our shared prosperity has been the difficulty of coordinating and paying for health insurance for our employees – those who are working now, those on reduced hours, and those we have had to lay off permanently. We are committed to paying for health insurance for our employees, because we believe health care coverage is a human right, and a global health crisis is not the time to waver in that belief.

As a small business owner, I fully support a public health care option like the one Biden has proposed. If we had a public option and health insurance was not tied to employment, we would be able to focus on what we do best, making craft beer and investing in our community.”

Aaron Seyedian, CEO of Well-Paid Maids in Maryland:

“What I want to hear is a concrete, federal plan to suppress the virus so that my business and millions of others like it can thrive again. I have done everything I can to make our business operations as safe as possible but I can't replace the role of the federal government. In addition, I would like to hear about their plans for preserving our Main Street economy while we wait for new actions to suppress the virus to take effect. A variety of support must be offered to small businesses but one thing that can't be ignored is healthcare - the employer-provided healthcare system did not work before the pandemic and it's definitely not working now. What is the plan to move more Americans onto no-cost public insurance and move us toward Medicare for All?”

Bram Kleppner, CEO of Danforth Pewter in Vermont:

“Our healthcare system delivers pretty good health care for government employees and their families, military personnel and their families, people on Medicare, and people who work at companies that can afford to, and decide they want to, provide decent health insurance. The healthcare system doesn’t deliver decent healthcare to anyone else, and it doesn’t deliver cost-efficient health care to anyone at all. Let’s fix it – Medicare for All solves all of the problems by providing decent healthcare to every American at much lower cost than private insurance.”

Steve Rand, owner of A.M. Rand Hardware in New Hampshire:

“For twenty years, my family hardware business has not been able to provide full health care insurance for our employees. For all that time, I have been convinced that health insurance should not be provided by employers. It is neither fair, nor efficient. COVID-19 proves that I am right. The probability of being infected has no relationship to a person's employment. The need for health services has no necessary correlation to a person's ability to get a job with benefits. I believe that health care should be a benefit and a RIGHT of our rich American society. Out of it, we will get a healthy, de-stressed workforce that will keep America as great as it promises. I favor a Medicare for All system for our country.”

Business Leaders for Health Care Transformation is a coalition of business leaders, CEOs, entrepreneurs, sole proprietors, and concerned citizens who believe that the employer-based health insurance system is fundamentally broken and hinders American competitiveness. The organization has more than 3,200 members across the country. To learn more, visit www.blhct.org