

# Oklahoma Healthcare Education Coalition (OHEC)

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The State Chamber of Oklahoma is proud to be a founding partner in the *Oklahoma Healthcare Education Coalition (OHEC)*. The focus of this coalition is to bring attention to the importance of a healthy and productive workforce in light of today's challenging economic environment.

Oklahomans are simply unhealthy due to our own bad habits. We have dismal health statistics and simply must change behaviors, maintain preventative health care activities, carry health insurance and attempt to assure that chronic health conditions are avoided. Our poor health statistics translate into less affordable health insurance and a high number of uninsured which, at approximately twenty percent, is one of the highest per capita uninsured levels in the nation. This enhances the cost shifting burden on those who purchase insurance and places a strain on state appropriations (your taxpayer dollars) in paying for those who access indigent care.

Initiating education programs designed to curb this trend will, in the long term, be extremely beneficial in developing a more accessible and affordable health care system for our state's business community and individual citizens. One educational component which can be utilized has been produced by the Oklahoma State Health Department called a Guide to a Strong and Healthy Oklahoma. Another educational coalition in which The State Chamber is a partner is Affordable Access to Healthcare which offers information regarding the implications of various health insurance "cost drivers" such as benefit and contract mandates. These are excellent resource tools for all Oklahomans.

With reference to making health insurance more appealing to the small business market is the *InsureOklahoma!* premium assistance program. This program allows businesses with 50 or fewer employees to receive a 60% premium reimbursement for providing a qualified health insurance plan to employees meeting certain salary guidelines.

In addition, The State Chamber of Oklahoma continues to develop marketplace policies and strategies designed to enhance the accessibility and affordability of private sector health insurance.

***The healthier we are, the more productive we are!***



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