

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, May 23, 2008**

**CONTACT: Dave Lemmon**  
**Geraldine Henrich**  
**Bob Meissner**  
**(202) 628-3030**

## **New National Survey of Mayors Highlights Impact of Growing Health Care Crisis on City Budgets and Services**

*Rising City Health Care Costs Put Squeeze on Spending for Other City Services*

**New President, Congress Must Act to Reform Health Care, Mayor Nutter, Others Say**

**Washington, D.C.** — A new report released today spotlights the concerns of mayors nationwide, who say that cities are on the front lines of the nation's growing health care crisis. Skyrocketing health care costs for municipal employees and the rising tide of uninsured people provided with safety net services threaten to force cuts in other basic city services, such as police and fire protection, schools, parks, and the repair of city streets and other infrastructure.

Titled "America's Health Care Crisis: Cities on the Front Lines," the report from Families USA, the national organization for health care consumers, is the first report of its kind to document the economic threat to America's cities posed by the growing health care crisis. The report's key conclusion is that mayors and city councils must aggressively deal with health care challenges on a daily basis, while federal officials delay action on meaningful reform.

Among the survey's findings:

- City budgets are increasingly strained trying to meet increased demands for safety net health services.
- Cities are experiencing new demands for health clinics, hospital emergency departments, mental health services, and problems affecting schools.
- Mayors strongly believe health care reform must be a top priority of the new administration and Congress next year.
- Cities are seeking significant increases in eligibility levels for Medicaid and the state Children's Health Insurance Program.

"Our cities face the dual challenges of assisting a rising number of uninsured Americans and providing increasingly expensive health coverage for their own employees," Ron Pollack, Executive Director of Families USA, said today.

“Cities should be praised for the innovative methods that they have adopted to fill the gaps in health coverage and access, but cities cannot solve the fundamental problems in America’s health care system,” Pollack said. “This is ultimately a national problem, and leadership and action must come from Washington.”

“As mayor of San Francisco, which offered the first universal access program for the uninsured, I know that America's cities can provide compassionate and innovative health care to their residents,” Mayor Gavin Newsom said today. “But we can't do this job alone. An overhaul of our nation's health care delivery must be one of the top priorities of a new administration and Congress in Washington in 2009.”

“There's no question, the lack of comprehensive health care reform on the national level has a severe impact on America's cities and America's working families,” Mayor David Cicilline, Providence, R.I., said today. “Cities, and even states, can't solve this problem alone - this requires real leadership and immediate action on the federal level.”

“Today's report makes crystal clear what many of us in cities across America—who are faced with the spiraling costs of health care both for our employees and our citizens—understand all too well,” said Philadelphia’s Mayor Michael A. Nutter. “It's threatening our economies, our families and our futures. It is time for Washington to stop the excuses and fix our broken health care system.”

“An overhaul of our nation’s health care delivery must be one of the top priorities of a new administration in Washington in 2009,” Mayor Martin Chavez of Albuquerque said today. “If Washington wants to assist cities in responding to the health care crisis, it can begin by helping us get more Americans insured.”

-30-

***The Families USA report, “America’s Health Care Crisis: Cities on the Front Lines,” is available at the Families USA Web site, [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org)***

*Families USA is the national organization for health care consumers. It is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advocates for high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans.*

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1100 \* Washington, DC 20005 \* 202-628-3030 \* Fax: 202-347-2417  
E-mail: [info@familiesusa.org](mailto:info@familiesusa.org) \* Web site: [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org)