



# K A N S A S

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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*The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:*

## **Health care reform**

Last month, we received some discouraging but not surprising news about health care coverage in our state. There are now more Kansans without health insurance than at any other time this decade. Nearly 340,000 Kansans do not have health insurance, including 58,000 children. This is the third year in a row that our uninsured numbers have increased.

The Legislature formed the Kansas Health Policy Authority and asked for a plan for comprehensive health care reform. Last year they received that plan, which included input from Kansas employers, families and health care providers, and would have insured far more Kansans. Not only would more Kansans have access to basic health coverage, but the plan included a number of proposals to lower costs for those Kansans with health insurance.

I endorsed the plan; as did many Republicans and Democrats, and those legislators deserve our respect and gratitude. But the leadership and the majority failed to move forward, so we made no progress. Costs continue to rise and more Kansas employers and families are dropping coverage.

We cannot wait any longer. The 2009 Legislature must get to work on health care reform. There is no more time to waste. All Kansans deserve access to quality health care, and they're counting on the Legislature. The time for real leadership and action on health care is now.

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