

RAHALL

Weekly Report

HEALTH CARE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

by Congressman Nick Rahall

I have recently joined in sponsoring the bill, HR 2552, the Health Care for the Unemployed Act. This measure is extremely important to the out-of-work residents of our State and Nation.

The bill addresses a problem that we have become all too familiar with: the loss of health insurance protection by a worker who has been laid off. In families with only one breadwinner, this often means the worker, the spouse, and the children are completely vulnerable to the high costs of hospital and physician care. According to the Congressional Budget Office, a startling 14 million unemployed workers and family members---including 4 million children---had no health protection in February.

This is simply not an acceptable state of affairs. That is why, after consulting with private insurers, providers, organized labor, and other interested parties, this proposal was prepared to address this immediate need and encourage long-term reform to assure that we never again expose this many unemployed people to total medical deficiency.

The cost of this measure, \$2.7 billion, comes well within the budget limits for FY1984. Therefore, it is a reasonable, and affordable proposal, and one that deserves support.