

Gov. Gregoire's statement on amicus brief filed in support of Affordable Care Act

Press Release Issued Friday, January 13, 2012 distributed at 12:45pm

OLYMPIA – Gov. Chris Gregoire today issued the following statement after submitting an amicus brief in support of the Affordable Care Act:

“Today I joined elected officials, doctors, and advocates from across the nation in filing an amicus brief in support of the minimum coverage provision of the Affordable Care Act. This provision is the cornerstone of the ACA, and is necessary to control the skyrocketing costs of health care.

“Our personal health, and the health of our economy is reliant on quality, affordable health care. Uncontrolled health care costs, in part due to the high cost of uncompensated care, have stifled the growth of small businesses, created a disincentive for hiring new employees and dramatically reduced the availability of affordable insurance through employer group plans.

“As the home state to a specialized medical trauma center, we know uninsured individuals are travelling across statelines to receive the urgent medical care they need – placing the financial burden on those who do have insurance. Individual states can't solve the problem of the uninsured alone. It requires federal action, allowable under the Commerce Clause, to regulate the interstate market in health care and insurance and get the spiraling costs of health care under control.

“We also know, from Washington state's own experience, that insurance coverage for pre-existing medical conditions must go hand in hand with the minimum insurance coverage requirements.

“Additionally, promising efforts are underway in Washington state to reform the delivery of health care to improve the health of consumers and lower the cost of their care. These efforts will only be successful with broad access to affordable insurance, including for small businesses. The minimum coverage provision of the ACA is critical to the success of these efforts.

“I thank the law firm of Schroeter, Goldmark & Bender and their attorneys Kristin Houser, Adam Berger, Rebecca Roe and William Rutzick, who have worked tirelessly – and without charging the taxpayers for any of their time – to defend the law and allow our citizens to continue to benefit from the ACA. I also commend the work of the Office of the Insurance Commissioner in assisting the attorneys by providing staff expertise and knowledge of our state's insurance situation as they prepared the brief.”