

RESOLUTION

-DIRECTING THE COUNTY CLERK TO PLACE THE REFERENDUM QUESTION CONTAINED IN THIS RESOLUTION REQUESTING STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON HEALTH CARE ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT-

WHEREAS, escalating health insurance costs are a major hardship for Eau Claire County residents, businesses, and local units of government, and

WHEREAS, such high costs discourage business expansion and job creation in Eau Claire, and burden individual citizens with high costs and the fear of losing health insurance coverage, and

WHEREAS, the Eau Claire County Strategic Plan adopted on February 7, 2006 states the County Board will “continually inform and challenge the local members of the State Legislature about the long range needs for adequate local services and the need for partnership between locally provided, state funded services,” and

WHEREAS, the cost of health insurance for Eau Claire County since 2001 has increased by an average of 19% per year, surpassing the fiscal caps (3%) initiated by the State Legislature by more than six-fold, and

WHEREAS, health insurance premiums for Eau Claire County have increased by 128% since 2001, now constituting over \$7 per employee hour, and are projected to increase by another 109% by 2011, and

WHEREAS, other local units of government in the Chippewa Valley have experienced similar increases, including a doubling of health care costs for the Eau Claire Area School District since 2001, and

WHEREAS, by some measures the Eau Claire area has among the highest health care costs in the nation, including the third highest physician costs in the United States according to a Government Accountability Office report last year, and

WHEREAS, Eau Claire County health insurance costs were 7% below the national average in 2001, but in 2005 were 17% above the national average, and

WHEREAS, these skyrocketing health care costs in the Eau Claire area are a result of changes in the health insurance market which are beyond the control of Eau Claire County, and

WHEREAS, despite the steep escalation in health insurance costs the State Legislature, which does have the power to remedy this situation, has failed to seriously consider comprehensive health care reform, and

WHEREAS, the following advisory referendum question is an effective way to determine whether the citizens believe that the next session of the State Legislature should take action:

Should the Wisconsin Legislature pass a bill that will reduce health care costs by at least 15% and adopt a long term plan to assure access to universal, affordable health care coverage for all Wisconsin individuals and families by 2008?

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors hereby directs the county clerk to place the question set forth above on the November ballot as an advisory referendum question.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the area legislators, Governor Jim Doyle and the Wisconsin Counties Association.