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## MEDIA STATEMENT

The following is a statement from Cathy Levine and Col Owens, Co-Chairs of Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage (OCHC), regarding President Obama's address on Health Care Reform to the Joint Session of Congress:

"We applaud President Obama for outlining a plan that will protect consumers from insurance company abuses by making it illegal to discriminate against people with pre-existing conditions or to change or drop coverage when a person gets sick, and by eliminating annual and lifetime maximums and limiting out of pocket expenses. We also applaud his plan to provide options for affordable coverage through a health care exchange and his commitment to reduce costs by increasing competition. We need immediate change and call on Congress to shape the future by making fixing health care its highest priority. We agree that the status quo is not an option.

The insured, the uninsured, and small businesses are all paying for the inefficiencies and skyrocketing costs of health care in our country. Further delay in addressing the health care crisis only puts Ohioans' health and financial security in peril. We must not let powerful special interests use misleading information and scare tactics to put real reform at risk.

Recent reports show that the cost of doing nothing is high. Over the next decade if reform is not enacted, there will be a dramatic decline in the percentage of people insured through their employers, and millions more will become uninsured. There will be large growth in public programs and major increases in health care spending and levels of uncompensated care. While all income levels would be affected, middle-class working families would be hardest hit.

But the real horror story is already happening now. When the uninsured do get care, they are sicker and treatment is expensive. And, care for the uninsured is being paid for by all of us in an unfair and inefficient way creating instability for those of us with insurance and for our small businesses.

We must protect the financial health of families and small businesses by making health insurance more affordable to all Americans. We can build on what is working well today, and fix what is not working so all Americans will have peace of mind that health care will be there when they need it. Indeed, it is a moral imperative. But nothing will change if Congress fails to act.

Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage will continue to work with our federal and state leaders until all Ohioans have access to affordable, high quality health care."

Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage is a nonpartisan coalition uniting the consumer voice with the goal of achieving affordable, high quality care for all. Our membership includes AARP, AFSCME Council 8 AFL-CIO, American Cancer Society, Cerebral Palsy Association of Ohio, Faith Community Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, National Alliance for Mental Illness (Ohio), National Multiple Sclerosis Society Ohio Chapters, Ohio ACORN, Ohio Council of Churches, Service Employees International Union, Toledo Area Jobs with Justice, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1059, UHCAN Ohio, We Are The Uninsured, and We Believe Ohio.