

**Washington, D.C.** - Congressman David Price (D-NC) issued the following statement today supporting H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act:

Over the past few months, I have attended town halls and roundtable discussions, met with a wide variety of constituent groups, conducted two telephone town halls with hundreds of participants, and read thousands of letters and emails from Triangle residents about the complex issue of health care reform. I have heard a lot of different views on how to improve our health care system, but nearly everybody agrees on one thing: Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

In the last ten years, premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance have risen at three times the rate of wages. The United States now spends 50 percent more per person on health care than the next costliest nation in the world. These skyrocketing costs are squeezing family budgets, threatening the viability of businesses, consuming state and local budgets, and exploding the federal deficit. At the same time insurance companies are raising premiums, they are cutting benefits, cancelling policies for those who get sick, and denying coverage whenever they can label something a "pre-existing condition."

The American people need a health care system that works for them – one that provides access to stable coverage, quality care, and affordable premiums and copayments. That's what health insurance reform is all about.

The bill moving through the House of Representatives (H.R. 3962) would provide a basic assurance to every American: Never again will you be denied health insurance. Under the legislation, insurance companies would be prohibited from discriminating on the basis of pre-existing medical conditions, age, or gender. In addition, the bill would establish a health insurance exchange so that uninsured individuals and small businesses could purchase coverage at the same affordable group rates which have always been negotiated by big businesses. The exchange would include a publically-administered plan as well as an array of private plans. Finally, those who like their present employer-provided coverage could keep it, but they would no longer be subject to lifetime benefit limits imposed by some insurance companies – and the loss of a job would no longer mean the loss of affordable health coverage. In short, the legislation would correct the failures of the American health care system without compromising its many strengths, or adding to the budget deficit.

I believe health insurance reform is an essential investment in our nation's long-term fiscal and economic well-being, and I plan to support HR 3962 when it comes before the House.

###