

About the Illinois Main Street Alliance:

Recently our Chamber office was contacted by an organization that is reaching out to small businesses throughout the state of Illinois who share their concerns on the effects of the high price of providing healthcare for themselves and their employees.

The **Illinois Main Street Alliance** is a collation of almost 400 Illinois small businesses working toward a comprehensive healthcare solution. The coalition is committed to quality health care that is affordable for small businesses and the communities they serve.

“Small businesses play a huge role in the debate about health care because, to a large degree, they have been priced out of the private insurance market. Many of the businesses in our coalition would like to provide a health package, but find it unaffordable because of their size or their individual health histories. Others, who do provide coverage, have had to shift more of the premium burden to employees because of rising costs and decreasing revenue,” says James Meerdink, an organizer for the citizen action group. “It’s not a sustainable system.”

Mr. Meerdink adds that the members of their coalition believe that doing nothing or continuing in the same direction as businesses have been in will only lead to more small businesses without coverage. Their group has separated themselves from the large organizations that have traditionally spoken for small businesses because they feel that they haven’t been doing a good job on health care reform.

The **Illinois Main Street Alliance** outlines their healthcare goals as follows:

- The ability to choose between a public health insurance option in addition to the private plans currently available.
- Stronger regulation of the private insurance industry in order to protect consumers
- Measures to stem rising health care costs, and incentives that will refocus the system on prevention and wellness.

To learn more about the campaign, add your voice to their mission or join the coalition, go to www.mainstreetalliance.org , or call James Meerdink at 312-427-2114 or email him at james@citizenaction-il.org.