

## Minnesotans in desperate need of public health care option

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President Barack Obama held another Town Hall meeting on health care reform Wednesday, and Minnesota supporters of reform want Congress to listen. Eliot Seide, executive director of *Minnesota*

*AFSCME Council 5*

, says health care premiums have increased 90 percent in eight years, meaning 1 million Minnesotans pay more than 10 percent of their income on health care.

"Health care ought not to be about business; health care ought to be about making people healthy. If we have a public plan, a public plan can drive down costs in a number of ways."

Opponents of reform say the nation cannot afford to insure everyone. And private insurance companies worry that a public option could drive them out of business. But Seide says nearly three of every four voters want the choice of a public health insurance plan.

A public health care option will drive down costs in a number of ways, he argues.

"Give the public plan the ability to do mass purchasing of drugs and then paying for performance, paying for preventative care, paying for outcomes and managing chronic diseases better."

Some elected officials want to pay for reform by making employer-paid health benefits taxable. A better solution, Seide suggests, would be taxing those who earn more than a \$250,000 a year.