

“Simple things such as treating a child’s ear infection are quickly becoming unreachable for too many Americans. We have the best health care in the world, but it does no good if Americans can’t afford it.”

## Health care crisis

# Manzullo makes plea for uninsured

SVN STAFF

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Health care costs have reached the crisis stage and Congress must act this year to prevent many more Americans from joining the ranks of the nation’s 41 million uninsured, said U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo, R-Egan.

“Too many small employers are on the edge. They face the horrible prospect of canceling health insurance for their employees, their families and their children in order to stay in business during these tough times,” said Manzullo, who is House Small Business Committee chairman.

Manzullo made the comments after hosting U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, Small Business Administration Administrator Hector Barreto and many other legislators and small business officials at a committee hearing Wednesday afternoon to seek solutions to America’s health care crisis.

U.S. Rep. Ernie Fletcher, R-Ky.,



Don  
Manzullo

and other witnesses discussed his legislation to create national Association Health Plans, which would allow small businesses to purchase group health insurance through a national organization, such as the National Federation for Independent Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce or the American Farm Bureau.

The legislation would bring down health care costs by allowing small employers to band together and purchase health insurance at the same economies of scale that large corporations currently enjoy.

Manzullo is a strong supporter of Fletcher’s legislation.

The witnesses also discussed the need to give small employers other options to battle surging health insurance costs.

Manzullo strongly supports legislation to allow expanded use of Medical Savings Accounts, which allow employers to contribute money to accounts set up for their employees to purchase their own health care.

MSAs were created by Congress in 1996 but have not realized their full potential because of limits on participants and limits on contributions.

Manzullo also supports President Bush’s plan to provide refundable tax credits for low- and middle-income Americans to purchase health insurance.

“Simple things such as treating a child’s ear infection are quickly becoming unreachable for too many Americans. We have the best health care in the world, but it does no good if Americans can’t afford it,” Manzullo said.