



**Interview with Rob Fowler
Chairman of MHIAC and
President and CEO of the Small
Business Association of Michigan**

What is the mission of MHIAC?

Our mission includes seeking solutions that will ensure that all Michigan residents have access to affordable health insurance coverage, educating the public about the need for health insurance, and conducting research on issues related to the uninsured.

What are its plans?

As stakeholders in this critical issue, MHIAC will be a genesis of ideas as well as a policy sounding board for elected officials. We will provide consistent, non-partisan analyses and recommendations.

What makes MHIAC unique?

The real strength is that this is a group of stakeholders – including providers, business and labor groups representing varied sectors, consumers, payers, and faith-based organizations. This is a public policy issue – and human issue – that requires foresight and a steady course. In the age of legislative term limits, it is often challenging for our state Legislature to confront long-term policy issues. This group represents those who are going to be here long after elected officials come and go. And while not everyone at the MHIAC table agrees on everything, we agree that the uninsured is a critical issue that demands our attention.

Why is this issue important to small businesses?

Ninety percent of small business owners consider the cost of health insurance at the top or near the top of a list of serious issues facing Michigan. Ninety-one percent of small businesses that do not offer health insurance cite cost as the reason. It's the fastest growing cost of doing business in Michigan. We hope that being involved in MHIAC will help us make progress in addressing the issue of the uninsured and thereby make progress in addressing our problem, which is the cost of health insurance.