

NOVEMBER, 2009

# Legislative Update



## **ACT NOW—Time is Running Out to Extend the Homebuyer Tax Credit**

Source: NLBMDA, October 27, 2009

There is just one month left before the first-time homebuyer tax credit is due to expire on November 30, 2009. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA) has been working to negotiate an extension for possible Senate consideration this week during the scheduled debate on unemployment benefits legislation. Isakson and Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) have been promoting a measure that would expand the credit to all primary home purchases, raise the income caps to make it available to more prospective buyers, and extend the credit through June 30, 2010. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) have floated a version that extends the credit, as is, though June 30 and then phases it out through the second half of 2010. Contact your Senators today to urge them to ACT NOW to extend and enhance the home buyer tax credit.

Send an email message to your Senators asking them to support the Isakson amendment to expand and extend the home buyer tax credit. If you've already emailed your legislators, please place a follow-up phone call to their offices to reiterate the urgency of acting now. Call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to be connected to your state's senators, and ask to speak to the aide for housing issues. Please contact NLBMDA Director of Government Affairs Colleen Levine at [colleen@dealer.org](mailto:colleen@dealer.org) with any feedback received.

## **How Much Will Federal Healthcare Reform Affect Your Premiums?**

**New data models insurance premiums for individuals, families and small businesses in Wisconsin.**

Source: WMC Capitol Watch, October 26, 2009

President Obama promised during the campaign that the average American family would save \$2,500 a year thanks to his healthcare reform plan. Two recent studies concluded, however, American families would pay more under the plan being considered by the U.S. Congress. A PricewaterhouseCoopers study, commissioned by America's Health Insurance Plans, concluded the cost of a family plan in 2019 would be \$4,000 a year higher if reform passes. An Oliver Wyman analysis, commissioned by Blue Cross Blue Shield, concluded much the same, that the cost of a family plan would be significantly higher.

A new study, released last Friday by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, takes an in-depth, comprehensive look at the effect of the current healthcare reform proposals on health insurance premiums in Wisconsin, specifically. This analysis presents real rates being charged to real individuals and groups today and shows how those rates are generally expected to change for new purchasers post-reform, without any adjustment for the increase in medical costs over time.

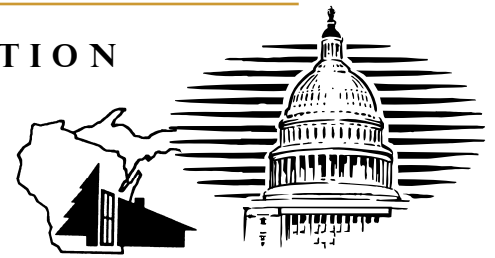
The report quantifies the premium impact for individuals and groups:

- A healthy 25-year old male in Milwaukee could expect to see up to 199 percent premium increase;
- A family with two kids and an average health status up to a 122 percent premium increase; and
- A 60 year old, less healthy couple up to an 11 percent decrease.

Small employers would see premium increases or decreases based upon their employee population's age and health status. For example:

- Younger/healthier group of eight: 53 percent premium increase
- Average age/health group of eight: 17 percent increase
- Older/less healthy group of eight: 11 percent decrease

These results reflect increases directly related to the proposed legislation. What makes this actuarial analysis different is that it uses actual cases, not averages, and specifically includes the impact of subsidies on premiums. For a full report go to the WMC website, [www.wmc.org](http://www.wmc.org)



## **NLBMDA Submits Comments to U.S. Green Building Council on Second Draft of Certified Wood Credit Benchmarks.**

Source: NLBMDA E-Update, October 19, 2009

On October 14, NLBMDA submitted comments to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) on its second draft of proposed revisions of the benchmarks for the certified wood credit in the LEED rating tool. Currently, wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only wood eligible for credit toward LEED certification. USGBC has proposed a new system of “benchmarks” that any certification scheme could be evaluated against to determine if their certification procedures would be acceptable to USGBC.

Once again, NLBMDA’s reiterated its policy is to support the inclusion of all recognized certification schemes for credit in green building rating systems as well as the adoption of a permanent eco-label identifying the USGBC-recognized forest certification scheme certifying the product permanently marked by the producing mill on a face or side of each piece of dimension lumber. NLBMDA is particularly concerned that the benchmarks as drafted would continue to exclude non-FSC certification schemes and would render the LEED wood credit meaningless in the North American market.

To view NLBMDA’s comments visit <http://www.dealer.org/files/public/NLBMDA%20COMMENTS%20LEED%20ROUND%202%20AS%20SUBMITTED.pdf>. Members with question should contact Frank Moore at [frank@dealer.org](mailto:frank@dealer.org).

## **Legislation Introduced to Tie Tax Credit for Windows, Doors, and Skylights to Energy Star** Source: NLBMDA E-Update, October 19, 2009

On October 15, Sens. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA) introduced legislation that would modify the existing tax credit for energy efficient windows, doors, and skylights for 2010 by tying it to established ENERGY STAR® standards for fenestration products. The current \$1,500 tax credit, passed as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), limited the tax credit to windows, doors, and skylights “equal to or below a U-factor of 0.30 and SHGC (solar heat gain) of 0.30,” commonly know as the “.30/.30 standard.”

There has been a great deal of confusion over the one-size-fits-all approach of the current tax credit, which fails to recognize that different regions of the country require different standards to achieve improved energy efficiency depending on climate. Established ENERGY STAR® standards have different requirements for four different regions.

Further, the current tax credit tied to the .30/.30 standard effectively eliminated skylights from even qualifying for tax credits. Skylights are installed in a non-vertical application, and are also tested that way. They also project above the plane of the roof, unlike windows, which are installed in the plane of the wall. Because of this, their U-factor is higher than windows of identical construction. In addition, skylights are installed expressly to admit daylight. The .30 SHGC is actually too dark in the northern zones of the country and eliminate beneficial solar heat gain.

Specifically, the Rockefeller-Grassley bill (S1792) would replace the .30/.30 standard for the tax credit and replace it with the 2010 ENERGY STAR® standards for windows, doors, and skylights. It would apply to purchase in 2010.

**SAVE THE DATE—NLBMDA’s Legislative Conference  
March 15-17, 2010  
Washington DC**