

November 03, 2009

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Update My Profile](#)

U.S. Senator

TOM HARKIN OF IOWA



<http://harkin.senate.gov>

(202) 224-3254

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2009

Contact: Kate Cyril / Bergen Kenny

(202) 224-3254

HARKIN LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION INTO INSURERS' PRICING PRACTICES

Questions Humana, United Health, WellPoint and Aetna About Pricing to Small Business

WASHINGTON, DC – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee, today announced that the Committee will conduct an investigation into the pricing practices of health insurance companies in the small group market. The announcement was made in his introductory remarks of today's HELP Committee hearing, "Increasing Health Costs Facing Small Businesses."

"For a small businesses' premiums to skyrocket, all it takes is one diagnosis for one employee – or the spouse of an employee. All it takes is one older employee, a drop in the number of employees in the business, or a pre-existing condition," **Harkin said**. "At this hearing, I would have liked to question health insurance companies about these trends and practices. But not surprisingly, insurance companies are not interested in discussing them. So today I am announcing my own investigation into the pricing practices of health insurance companies that sell policies to small businesses. Health insurance companies should open their books and explain to the American people why they support a health insurance market for small businesses that is so dysfunctional, and so lacking in transparency."

Senator Harkin has sent letters (linked below) to Humana, United Health Group, WellPoint and Aetna asking that they provide the Committee with information regarding methods used to set rates and premiums, and on compensation for individuals that exceeds \$5,000,000 annually. Chairman Harkin requested that the companies provide this information to the Committee by November 17, 2009.

Links to the four letters can be found below:

<http://harkin.senate.gov/documents/pdf/4af08794ba235.pdf>

<http://harkin.senate.gov/documents/pdf/4af0883aec822.pdf>

<http://harkin.senate.gov/documents/pdf/4af087b247d5e.pdf>

<http://harkin.senate.gov/documents/pdf/4af0876f5a987.pdf>