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## **Sen. Green Sponsors Bill to Expand Access to Health Care Measure Provides Incentives for Employers to Provide Coverage**

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Tim Green, D-Spanish Lake, said today that Missouri lawmakers must ensure access to adequate health care for every child, adult, senior or disabled citizen of the state. He says the top priority for Senate Democrats during the 2008 legislative session will be restoring the Medicaid cuts made at the urging of Governor Blunt in 2005.

“Health care is a significant issue facing all of us,” Sen. Green said. “I believe that working families, individuals, seniors and the disabled should not be priced out of the health care, medicines and insurance coverage which help them maintain their quality of life.”

Green says 700,000 Missourians lack health insurance, including 121,000 children who do not have health insurance. A study by the Kaiser Foundation finds Missouri has more uninsured citizens than five of the eight states that border Missouri. Green notes about 55,000 fewer children are covered by Medicaid or the state Children’s Health Insurance Program since the health care cuts were enacted in 2005.

Sen. Green is leading the drive to create an income tax deduction for small businesses and farmers to help them provide health insurance coverage for their employees. Senate Bill 893 creates a tax deduction equal to 100% of the expenses related to providing employees with health insurance. Green says the bill requires employers to pay a fair share for employees’ health insurance.

“Any business or enterprise that receives state tax credits or tax deductions should be required to contribute fairly to the costs of health insurance for their employees,” Green said. “I have sponsored legislation toward this goal every year in the Missouri Senate. It’s unacceptable to continue giving tax credits to wealthy special interests, while refusing to restore health care to 55,000 children that had it when Governor Blunt took office. Missouri can provide the quality, affordable health coverage for every Missourian if we have the leadership.”

This week Sen. Green was honored at the 22nd Annual Missouri Nurses Association (MONA) Nurse Advocacy Day. Sen. Green received the 2008 Excellence in Healthcare Legislative Award in appreciation for his dedication to professional nursing and his support of legislation that promotes quality care for all Missourians. More than 550 RNs and nursing students from throughout the state traveled to Jefferson City this week to demonstrate to lawmakers the important role RNs play in shaping health policy.

“I am honored to be recognized by the dedicated nurses of our state, who are on the front lines in providing quality healthcare services to our citizens,” Sen. Green said. “By working together, we can ensure all Missourians have access to affordable health care.”

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