



Health Care Plan Attractive to Small Business

Reported by: *Meghan Backus*
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The President's health care reform plan could give small business owners an incentive to offer insurance to its employees.

Sticky Lips Pit Bar-B-Que wants to offer its 60 employees health care coverage, but Martha Ognibene says there is no way the restaurant could afford it.

"Every time I come up with that bottom figure, it's sort of a hard one to swallow," she said.

Ognibene says she has been researching health coverage for the last year. She says the business could offer insurance if there were fewer employees, but she is not willing to layoff employees.

The President's health care reform plan could help small businesses like Sticky Lips. His proposal calls for \$40 billion in tax credits for companies that help give coverage for their workers.

"Depending on what those tax credits really are, that'll be a big key for us to see what our bottom line is going to be," Ognibene said.

Sandy Parker, president of the Rochester Business Alliance, says it is a great idea to help all local small businesses. She says health care costs are increasingly taking up larger parts of budgets, but she says the plan does not go far enough.

"The President's bill is still not looking at not addressing what cost drivers are and that's the primary issue we have with this bill," Parker said.

Ognibene says the tax credits could make the difference between offering health insurance and not. For now, employees will have to fend for themselves.

”At this point we just try to offer a nice wage and then hopefully they can get them on their own whatever way they choose,” Ognibene said.

The President's proposal does not mandate small businesses to offer health coverage to employees. If passed, the plan would take effect this year.
