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HCAN Statement on New Rules for Health Insurance Premium Rate Review

Here is a comment from **Ethan Rome**, executive director of [Health Care for America Now](http://HealthCareforAmericaNow.org) (HCAN), on the health insurance premium rate review rules announced today by the Department of Health and Human Services:

“Consumers won an important victory today over the \$800 billion-a-year health insurance industry. These new rules will help stop health insurance companies from ramming unjustified premium rate increases down our throats and basing double-digit rate hikes on phony calculations. The companies have been making out like bandits with massive rate increases that have no relationship to their actual costs. From 1999 to 2009, health insurance companies raised premiums a staggering 131 percent – three times the growth of wages and four times the rate of overall inflation.

"For the first time there are rules to hold the insurance companies accountable for huge rate hikes by shining light on the financial data they claim justifies double-digit rate increases year after year. The days of insurance companies running roughshod over consumers and jacking up our rates whenever they want are over. The new rate review rules represent a key step toward finally ending the insurance companies' stranglehold on our health care.

“Not surprisingly, the Republicans want to repeal this rate review process and all the other tough consumer protections in the new health care law, such as the ban on denying sick people care. The Republicans care more about the excessive profits of the insurance companies than the health care of America's struggling middle-class families.”

-30-

Health Care for America Now is a national grassroots coalition of more than 1,000 organizations in 46 states representing 30 million people. HCAN led the fight over the past two years to win passage of health reform and to keep Congress from being steamrolled by corporate special interests.