

2007 STEPS COMMUNITY HEROES AWARDS PROGRAM
HELD ON JUNE 6, 2007 IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

ROB MOFFAT'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH
TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO

ROB MOFFAT: I work for an organization called COSE C-O-S-E. It stands for the Council of Small Enterprises. We're a non-profit organization that groups together small businesses. We have seventeen thousand small businesses and over two hundred and twenty-five thousand employees in our membership. Basically we do two things. We use our strength for lobbying and advocacy and we use it for purchasing. The most important thing that we purchase is health insurance. Now as I mentioned before I talk to a lot of small business owners and a lot of large business owners too actually. And there's one thing now that's on their mind and it's the same thing that's on the public's mind in politics - you see it everywhere - it's the health care crisis. And I gotta tell you. If you can get a business owner to complain about anything other than taxes, you should probably listen.

The healthcare crisis, it's kind of a buzz word. It's on the cover of the USA Today. It's everywhere. You really have to take a step back and ask, what does that mean? Everybody has a different definition but most people put it in perspective of the uninsured public. Forty six million uninsured. You kind of have to dig deeper than that also. Why do we have a problem with uninsured? Well we've seen an eight percent drop in businesses that offer health insurance over the past five years. It's a bit of a problem. So if you dig deeper than that and you ask why - why are businesses, especially small business, getting out of health insurance benefit offering. It has to do with cost. When it comes down to cost, I don't think we can stop there either. You really have to take a step further and ask if we have a healthcare cost crisis, why does that exist? Depending on whose research you want to cite, anywhere between fifty and seventy percent of cost in today's healthcare system is directly related to preventable lifestyle related disease. I'm sure it's something that you talked about pretty much over the past three days. Most of those costs come from smoking, poor nutrition, or a lack of physical activity. That message isn't complicated. Employers get it. They understand it. And employers aren't getting out of the health insurance offering because they don't care. It's simply because they can't do it anymore. They can't afford it. They understand the message. They understand why costs are going up and they're very, very eager to find solutions.

So the gist of my message today is to encourage you within your communities to work with employers as much as possible. You have a captive audience. You have an employee population of at least forty hours a week at least sometimes a lot more. You've got the employer as an engaged partner. It's a very unique situation. You can ride essentially the healthcare crisis and you can create additional programming that uses the worksite as an effective communication vehicle. Don't ignore that. Don't overlook it. For the CDC, please continue to look for new options and opportunities that utilize the worksite as an effective vehicle. I've been doing this for eight years and I've been an evangelical for worksite health promotion since then and it's finally at a point where people are starting to pay attention to its value.

END OF SPEECH