



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES HUNDREDS OF EMPLOYERS SIGNING UP FOR
HEALTHY SAN FRANCISCO PROGRAM**

Universal healthcare program reaching an additional 12,900 employees

San Francisco, CA – Today, Mayor Gavin Newsom heralded preliminary data indicating 734 local employers have selected the Healthy San Francisco program as the healthcare choice for their employees. These employers have committed almost \$6 million toward healthcare expenditures for their employees, benefiting 12,900 workers. There are approximately 19,000 residents currently enrolled in the Healthy San Francisco program.

"Employers have stepped up and are pitching in to make sure our workers stay healthy and on the job," said Mayor Newsom. "I want to thank them for their support of our efforts to expand universal healthcare access to uninsured residents, including access to people who work in the City."

The Health Care Security Ordinance (HCSO) is the San Francisco law that created an Employer Spending Requirement (ESR) and requires the Department of Public Health to create the Health Access Plan, now called Healthy San Francisco. The ESR requires employers to spend a minimum amount of money on health care expenditures for their employees. Healthy San Francisco is one option by which an employer can satisfy its obligation to make the required health care expenditure. Other options include providing private health insurance plans or medical reimbursement accounts.

For employers with 50 or more employees, the ESR went into effect on January 9, 2008. Employers with 50 or more employees were required to make health care expenditures for the first quarter by April 30. On April 1, the ESR went into effect for employers with 20-49 employees. The first expenditure deadline for covered employers with 20-49 employees is July 30. The Office of Labor Standards Enforcement has held over 50 public informational sessions with employers to educate them about the ESR.

"Despite original assertions to the contrary, the legislation was never meant to penalize business but rather to offer an affordable health care option while preventing any slippage in benefits or coverage," said Supervisor Tom Ammiano, one of the authors of the HCSO. "Having employers choose to enroll their employees in Healthy San Francisco shows that the City is filling a niche essential to both employers and their uninsured employees. Businesses finally have an affordable health care option, and this demonstrated level of buy-in from the business community proves that there was and is a demonstrable need for health plan like Healthy SF."

Healthy San Francisco is San Francisco's universal healthcare program aimed at covering the City's 73,000 uninsured residents. For more information on Healthy San Francisco visit <http://www.HealthySanFrancisco.org>.

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