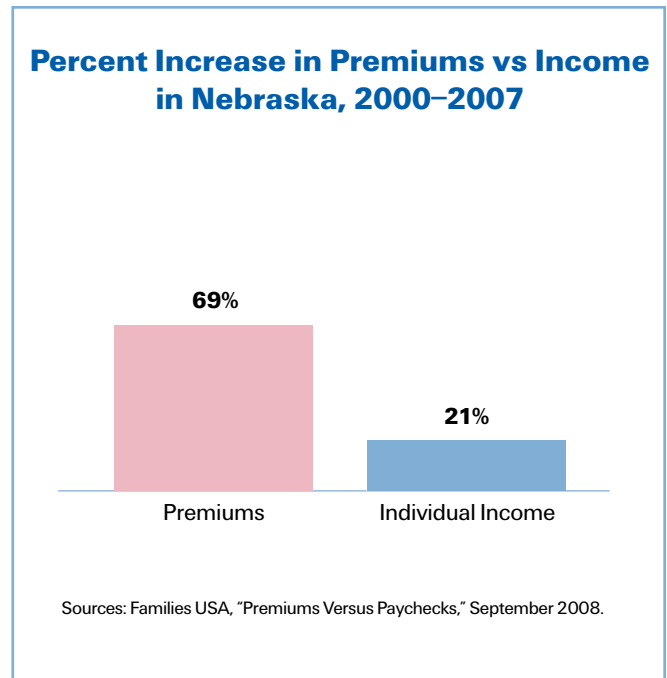
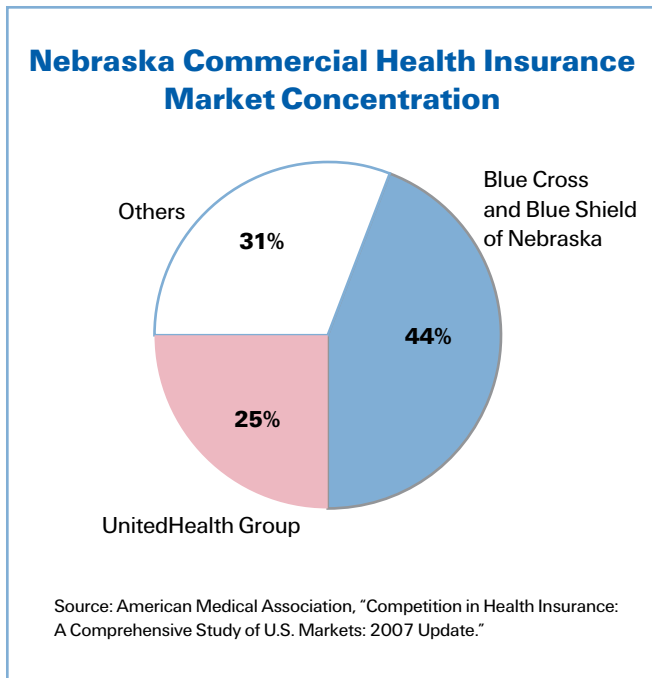


# Nebraska Consumers Pay the Price For Health-Insurance Market Failure

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, the state's biggest health insurer, holds 44 percent of the state commercial market for health insurance. Together with UnitedHealth Group Inc., they control 69 percent of the market.<sup>1</sup>
- Health insurance premiums for Nebraska working families have skyrocketed, increasing 69 percent from 2000 to 2007.<sup>2</sup>
- For family health coverage in Nebraska during that time, the average annual combined premium for employers and employees rose from \$6,760 to \$11,434.<sup>3</sup>
- For family health coverage in Nebraska from 2000 to 2007, the average employer's portion

- of annual premiums rose 69 percent, and the average worker's share also grew by 69 percent.<sup>4</sup>
- From 2000 to 2007, the median earnings of Nebraska workers increased 21 percent, from \$21,255 to \$25,802. During that time health insurance premiums for Nebraska working families rose 3.2 times faster than median earnings.<sup>5</sup>

When a firm has more than a 42 percent share of a single market, the U.S. Justice Department considers that market to be "highly concentrated." This means that an insurer could raise premiums and/or reduce the variety of plans or quality of services offered to customers with impunity.<sup>6</sup>



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>AMA data in this report are based on combined enrollment in preferred provider organizations (PPOs) and health maintenance organizations (HMOs) in states and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The AMA calculates market share by dividing an insurer's enrollment in a given product by the total enrollment across all insurers in a market multiplied by 100. Total enrollment is for commercial products only, including self-insured employer-sponsored PPO plans and individual coverage, and does not include Medicare, Medicaid, or Children's Health Insurance Program enrollments. Self-insured employer plans refer to PPOs only. Accessed at <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/competition2007>.

<sup>2</sup>Families USA, "Premiums versus Paychecks," September 2008. Accessed at <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/premiums-vs-paychecks-2008.html>.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>US Department of Justice, "The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index." Accessed at [http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/guidelines/horiz\\_book/15.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/public/guidelines/horiz_book/15.html); American Hospital Association, "The Case for Reinvigorating Antitrust Enforcement for Health Plan Mergers and Anticompetitive Conduct to Protect Consumers and Providers and Support Meaningful Reform," May 11, 2009. Accessed at <http://www.aha.org/aha/content/2009/pdf/09-05-11-antitrust-rep.pdf>.

This report makes use of data published by the American Medical Association (AMA), which is not a member of the Health Care for America Now coalition. The AMA did not collaborate with HCAN on this report.