



Wal-Mart's War on Healthcare

High premiums and deductibles keep more than two-thirds of Wal-Mart workers from participating in the company health plan. Most Wal-Mart employees cannot afford to pay the expensive premiums and deductibles required for coverage.

- The average worker would have to pay one fifth of his paycheck for healthcare coverage at Wal-Mart.
- On a wage of about \$8 an hour and 29-32 hours of work a week, many workers must rely on state programs or family members or simply live without health insurance.
- Nearly 700,000 Wal-Mart workers are forced to get health insurance coverage from the government or through spouses' plans. Wal-Mart shifts the cost of health insurance to taxpayers and other employers, driving up the health costs for all of us.
- When other companies get tired of paying the bill for Wal-Mart, they drop or reduce healthcare benefits for their employees. There are more than 40 million uninsured working families. The more Wal-Mart grows so do the number of the uninsured.
- Wal-Mart has increased the premium cost for workers by over 200% since 1993—medical care inflation only went up 50% in the same period.
- Wal-Mart owners the Walton family is worth about \$102 billion—less than 1% of that could provide affordable healthcare for associates.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) reported in 2002 that United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Union-represented supermarket workers are two-and-a half times as likely to have pension coverage than non-union workers and twice as likely to have health insurance coverage than retail food workers without union representation.

On June 4, a lawsuit was filed on behalf of Wal-Mart workers and supported by the UFCW that alleges the giant retail company violated the law by misleading its workers with language in its employee handbook stating that they would be excluded from benefits if they became union-represented (*Lupiani v. Wal-Mart Stores*, N.D. Cal., CO32614, filed 6/4/03). The suit, brought on behalf of participants and beneficiaries of various Wal-Mart employee benefit plans and employee pension plans, seeks an order requiring Wal-Mart to change the language in its benefit book and to notify employees of their rights to form a union without losing their benefits.