As our economy rides the rollercoaster rails of recession uncertainty, the long sought fix for escalating health care costs is never more pressing. According to a freshly released report, escalating health care costs undermine the ability of U.S. organizations to compete internationally. The report, “Employer Health Costs in a Global Economy: A Competitive Disadvantage for U.S. Firms,” finds U.S. companies spending twice as much for health benefits than their foreign competition. Marry that disadvantage with our current erratic credit market and economic instability, and the vulnerability becomes even more magnified.

Against the cold press of widespread economic challenges, what options of survival should today’s employers consider? Now more than ever, American employers would do well by restructuring their health care financing to one that optimizes health, wellness and productivity, but also aligns financing equitably – one that ties individual employee costs to how those individuals engage in their health.

At a time of severe and unknown economic challenges, organizations can no longer shoulder the unnecessary burden of financing the 50%+ of health care costs directly linked to unhealthy, discretionary behaviors. In fact, employers are likely to see these avoidable costs burgeon rather than thin unless they take decisive action. Positive proof is a recent national survey that indicates the perilous economy is widening the wellness gap even greater – some 42% of Americans report the economy is having a negative impact on their wellness choices. The rising costs of maintaining a balanced, healthy diet, as one example, is becoming even more of a barrier to health than it was formerly.

RedBrick Health has a solution mindful employers are adopting to curb discretionary health care spending and align its financing. Unlike “cut and run” cost shift solutions or “one and done” incentive structures, RedBrick Health’s Consumer Owned Health solution provides a comprehensive response to a complicated problem. RedBrick Health’s equitable financing structure allows individuals to pay their fair share of health care based on their own levels of engagement (a structure sorely lacking for health care but inherent in virtually every other structure of insurance.) What’s more, RedBrick Health’s solution provides individuals with advanced, non-biased and personalized consumer and health advocacy and coaching to help transform all individuals into engaged consumers.

The opportunity for today’s employers is significant – avoid the freefall of overwhelming rising health care costs, especially in turbulent times, while supporting healthier, more productive and more engaged employees. It’s the best protection we can imagine for enduring the rattle and hum of current and pending inclement economic weather.

INNOVATION NEWS
Value Based Benefits — Pharmacy Advocacy

Through the addition of our pharmacy partner, BidRx, RedBrick Health is excited to be rolling out an advanced pharmacy consumer tool to our members – one that provides valuable consumer information as well as impressive prescription savings opportunities. Our pharmacy tool, the latest in the wide menu of consumer advocacy resources integrated in the RedBrick Health offering, provides consumers the opportunity to enter their prescription information and instantly obtain:

- Comparative pricing and information (including prescription alternatives)
- Immediate discount opportunities (such as available incentives, coupons or manufacturer discounts)
- The opportunity to purchase discounted medications immediately or receive even deeper discounts by allowing pharmacies and mail order companies to competitively “bid” their lowest prices.

Our BidRx tool is an advanced consumer solution for the otherwise high cost of prescription drugs – an open, competitive and transparent marketplace.