

CCHCC Victories: Four Decades of Change

Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC), a grassroots citizen action organization, was founded in 1977. CCHCC's mission is dedicated to: a) giving consumers a voice in the health care system, and b) quality, affordable health care for all.

CCHCC carries out its mission through consumer education, advocacy, and community organizing. It is through community organizing that CCHCC has achieved its most stunning victories. Below is a review of CCHCC's victories spanning four decades.

1970s

- Elected the first consumer representatives to the local Health Systems Agency board.
- Exposed and halted illegal billing of Medicaid recipients at Mercy Hospital. Won refunds from Mercy Hospital to Medicaid recipients.

1980s

- Published *The Doctor's Directory* and gains acclaim from the Consumer Affairs Director of the White House.
- Established the Consumer Health Hotline, staffed by trained volunteers. The Hotline currently receives over 5,000 calls a year.
- Forced an investigation of three local hospitals for Hill-Burton violations. As a result, Hill-Burton assistance in the form of free and low-cost hospital care grows tenfold over previous years.
- Launched Women's Health Task Force investigation into DES, a cancer-causing drug given to pregnant women from 1942 to 1972. Local efforts result in statewide success to resist the repeal of the DES Act of Illinois, which protects the rights of DES victims.
- Established hospital free and low-cost care programs for low-income patients.
- Challenged a Clinic's unethical policy of including psychiatric notes in a patient's general medical record. The Illinois Human Rights Authority orders Clinic to change its policy, citing violations of patient confidentiality.
- Stopped a local hospital from dumping Medicaid patients from its nursing home. The campaign resulted in the Illinois Attorney General's decision to help pass a new state law protecting the rights of all Medicaid patients in Illinois nursing homes.
- Eliminated out-of-pocket expenses for seniors with the creation of the Medicare 100/Plus Program, a collaborative program between CCHCC and a local hospital.
- Established midwifery services in Champaign County.
- Helped to expand the availability of affordable pre-natal services for county residents.
- Repealed Medicaid discriminatory policies at a local hospital and clinic through a class action complaint.
- Passes a health care non-discrimination referendum in the City of Urbana; referendum wins by a stunning 63% of the vote.
- Spearheaded a statewide drive to strengthen Illinois laws for weeding out bad doctors, resulting in a 30% increase of physician registration fees to fund 30 additional state investigators.
- Uncovered the waste of millions of tax dollars in the state Medicaid dental program. CCHCC's work prompts independent investigations and actions by the Illinois Auditor General and the Illinois Attorney General.

- Launched the “Campaign for Better Health Care,” a statewide initiative to unite diverse community interests in efforts to improve health care delivery throughout Illinois.

1990s

- Established the Dental Referral Program – a collaboration between CCHCC and area dentists – to ensure affordable access to dental care for low-income adults.
- Pressured HMOs to comply with state laws and increase consumer input into policy decisions.
- Established a school breakfast program for rural Champaign County children.
- Organized county residents to establish a Public Health Department through a referendum.
- Assisted Sidney area residents in establishing a community-owned and operated clinic.
- Began CCHCC’s groundbreaking work on medical debt and hospital billing and collection policies.
- Established a tuberculosis testing and treatment program for County residents through the County Public Health Department.
- Organized a campaign to reinstate the hospital benefits of the Medicare 100 /Plus Programs when the local hospital ended its participation in the Program. The campaign would last for seven years before the hospital reinstated the programs.
- Organized a coalition on property tax issues and community benefit obligations of non-profit hospitals.

2000s

- Organized members of a local HMO in a successful campaign to keep two highly popular independent doctors from being dropped by the HMO.
- Organized community support for state FamilyCare legislation to expand KidCare coverage to uninsured low-income parents.
- Initiated the Gun Regulation Project, as part of a national effort to implement federal regulation of guns as consumer products.
- Established the innovative and award-winning Child Dental Access Program for low-income Champaign County children through the County Public Health Department.
- Established public health home nurse visits for county residents through the County Public Health Department.
- Executive Director and CCHCC received national recognition with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Community Health Leaders award.
- Organized the Women’s Health Task Force and established a free contraceptives program for University of Illinois employees.
- Organized a statewide campaign to enact a contraceptive health insurance coverage law in Illinois.
- Established the SSI Project as part of the Consumer Health Hotline to help youth and adults with disabilities obtain and keep needed benefits and support.
- Organized a community coalition that brought national attention to the issue of hospital billing and collection and charity care policies, put a halt to harmful hospital debt collection practices, and worked with local hospitals to create a model community collaboration for establishing decent charity care, billing, and collection policies.

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