



# Champaign County Health Care Consumers

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*Grassroots organizing for health care justice and health care for all since 1977.*

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Media Advisory

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## **Dialysis Patients Schedule Rally to Demand Rights & Quality Care**

*Patients and their Caregivers target Renal Research Institute's Champaign Urbana Dialysis Center*

On Wednesday, June 23, 2004, at noon, a group of dialysis patients, caregivers, and consumer advocates will hold a rally to demand patients' rights and better quality of care from the Champaign Urbana Dialysis Center. The rally will take place at the northeast corner of University Avenue and Wright Street in Urbana.

At the rally, a number of patients and caregivers will speak about their experiences and the serious, ongoing problems at the dialysis center, which is owned and operated by Renal Research Institute. Participants will then walk over to the Champaign-Urbana Dialysis Center (located on the campus of Provena Covenant Medical Center), where a contingent will go into the Dialysis Center to present the group's demands and hundreds of petitions signatures supporting the demands to Dialysis Center management.

**Background.** In 1999, Provena Covenant Medical Center's dialysis unit was taken over by Renal Research Institute of New York and renamed the Champaign Urbana Dialysis Center. Soon after, patients and their caregivers began complaining about cutbacks in staffing and the quality of care, as well as a disrespectful and sometimes intimidating approach by unit management staff toward patients and caregivers.

Persistent efforts by the patients led to a surprise inspection of the Dialysis Center in August 2003 by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Center For Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). After that inspection, the Dialysis Center was temporarily decertified by CMS, but given a timeline for coming back into compliance with minimum federal standards for dialysis units.

A subsequent re-inspection by IDPH and CMS found that the Dialysis Center had improved conditions enough to maintain certification, but CMS noted that the unit had "remaining deficiencies." Patients and caregivers have reported that conditions have not improved and, in fact, the Center has abandoned some of the improvements that IDPH and CMS had noted.

The dialysis patients and caregivers have been seeking substantive dialogue with the management of the Dialysis Center, but the Center has been unresponsive.

**WHO:** Dialysis patients, their caregivers, and Champaign County Health Care Consumers

**WHAT:** Rally for Dialysis Patients' Rights

**WHERE:** Northeast corner of University Avenue and Wright Street, Urbana

**WHEN:** Wednesday, June 23, 2004 at 12 noon