

Volunteer Profile Article – Ron Eaker - by Anne Gargano

Although he only became involved with Champaign County Health Care Consumers about 6 months ago, Ron Eaker has become a real leader in CCHCC's Health Care Access Task Force. Ron became involved with CCHCC after being referred to CCHCC by Sally Anderson when he was being harassed by Carle Clinic's billing department. He said that he probably wouldn't have gotten involved if he hadn't had such a bad personal experience with Carle Clinic. However, when he attended the first Health Care Access Task Force meeting in May and saw how many people were being affected, he knew that he wanted to get involved.



Ron has a lot of experience being a leader, as he was a United Methodist clergyman for 22 years. During that time he began working to improve the quality of life for seniors. Ron said, "Elder abuse is a very serious topic for me. I felt more and more pulled to help them and make a difference." Ron began to feel that he would be of more use outside of the clergy, so he began working as a manager for nursing homes. In this new role, Ron took on the challenge of working to drastically improve the Care Center of Urbana (now Helia). Now that Ron has taken a less stressful job as the manager of a storage facility, he is dedicating his time and hard work to improving health care access in our community. He said, "I feel like working to help change health care access may be my niche, my calling now."

Claudia Lennhoff, CCHCC's Executive Director says, "Ron is incredibly friendly and has a great sense of humor. He is always willing to step up to a challenge and do new things, such as speaking at our press conferences. He is monitoring the Attorney General's lawsuit against the local clinics and he reports to the Task Force at our meetings to keep everyone up to date. His passion for social change, combined with his skills and leadership experience make Ron an excellent asset to our Health Care Access Task Force. We are so fortunate to have him!"

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CCHCC would like to thank everyone who has lent their support to this important issue thus far and remind the community that this fight is not over. Congress will be voting on SCHIP again very soon and we cannot let Rep. Johnson think that we are no longer watching. There are millions of families across the U.S. who depend on SCHIP for the health of their children. Claudia continues. "We can't stop calling on Rep. Johnson to do the right thing, even though he has failed us over and over again; we just can't give up -- we don't have that luxury. I'm proud of the people of the 15th Congressional District who have stood up for children's health and continue to do so."

Please call Rep. Johnson's local office at (217) 403-4690 and express your extreme disappointment in his previous votes against the SCHIP legislation. Call on him to listen to the people of his district and vote in favor of SCHIP by overriding the President's veto. The children of our district and our nation are counting on him.

