

HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 1978

CCHCC WINS MAJOR VICTORY WITH HSA DISAPPROVAL

Following CCHCC testimony, local government officials voted unanimously not to approve the East Central Illinois Health Systems Agency (HSA) application for full designation. The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, acting as the area A-95 review agency and representing major units of local government, sharply criticized the HSA for its failure to comply with federal regulations and democratic principles. Before the decision, the CCHCC had revealed that HSA governing bodies are unrepresentative of area residents, particularly low-income persons and women. We pointed out that the HSA restricts effectively public involvement from consumers, providers, labor unions, women and minority groups, religious bodies and local elected officials. We questioned the proposed HSA budget priorities. We reminded local officials that their own earlier conditions on the HSA have not been met. The only response by the HSA has been the removal of three consumer board members who were shown to be providers under the law. The HSA application now goes to the Statewide Health Coordinating Council (SHCC). The CCHCC plans to be there!

CCHCC MEMBER TESTIFIES BEFORE U.S. HOUSE AND SENATE SUBCOMMITTEES

Barry Checkoway, CCHCC chairperson, was one of three persons recently invited to Washington to testify on consumer involvement in HSAs. Based in part on experiences in east central Illinois, Checkoway testified that HSA boards are not always selected by democratic procedures or representative of their area populations. Representative Paul Rodgers of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment complimented him on the work of the CCHCC and expressed his hope that organizations in other communities would follow the CCHCC example. Senator Edward Kennedy of the Senate Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research told Checkoway that he shared the concerns of consumers. He added: "Thanks very much for your constructive contribution. I firmly believe that we need to get HSAs in compliance with federal regulations. The doors of Congress are always open to you. I hope you will keep pounding on them."

CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT WORKSHOP ATTRACTS LOCAL, REGIONAL CONSUMERS

In February local and regional health care consumers participated in a CCHCC workshop on consumer involvement in health care planning. The focus was on the constraints and prospects for effective consumer participation. Helping to lead workshop sessions were Frank Giarrizzo, President of the Association of Health Care Consumers, and Phil Chinn, President of the suburban Cook-DuPage County HSA and a national leader in consumer health planning. A highlight was the concluding talk by Chinn, who reminded consumers: "You've got to be concerned about more than consumer involvement. You've got to get consumer control of the entire board and its planning process to make the system really work for all consumers."

PUBLIC FORUM ON HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND COSTS

Attend the CCHCC public forum on community health care services and costs on Wednesday, April 5, at 7:30 pm, in the Urbana Adult Education Center (Sixth and Park Streets, one block west of Mercy Hospital). What services for health care operate in the community? How much do they cost? Who is served and who is excluded? How can they be improved? A panel of social service representatives will discuss these and other issues of concern. Panelists will include Andrea Schuver (caseworker, Cunningham Township Supervisor's Office), George Bell (attorney, Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance), Judith Barrier (MSW, Frances Nelson Health Center), and Joan Lathrop (MSW, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District). Come with questions and encourage others to attend.

CCHCC RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

"CCHCC proves that an independent and powerful health consumer organization can make a difference." So concludes a feature article on "Consuming Organizing Around HSAs: The Case of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers" in the March issue of Health Law Bulletin, a national publication. Each month the Bulletin focuses on an example of outstanding consumer organizing. The article provides a history of CCHCC and identifies accomplishments and current activities. This is the second time CCHCC has received national attention. The November, 1977, issue of the Consumer Health Action Network Newsletter reported on CCHCC efforts in Fall health planning elections in which 7 of 12 candidates endorsed by CCHCC were victorious.

CCHCC SEEKS NEW MEMBERS, MONEY

The Champaign County Health Care Consumers is an organization committed to improving health care delivery to all residents of our area. In less than a year, CCHCC has grown from a small group of concerned citizens into a strong consumer organization with a long list of accomplishments. But the continued success of our work depends upon your participation. Our membership is open to all and we encourage you to join. And we urge you to send us a contribution today. We are a nonprofit organization and must have your financial support to continue. Please complete the attached coupon and send us a contribution today.

ATTEND THE NEXT MEETING OF CCHCC

Attend the next meeting of the CCHCC on Thursday, April 13, at 7PM, in the Urbana Free Library. Auditorium. Discussion will center on the future of health planning in our area. CCHCC action proposals and programs will be considered. Come join the effort to improve health care for all residents of our area. For more information, call 344-5727.

WHY GET INVOLVED?

While health providers and hospitals have regulated health care planning, medical costs have skyrocketed and the problems of quality and accessibility remain. In the last 15 years, total national health care expenditures have increased by 45 percent to a total of \$139.5 billion in 1976, placing health care ahead of defense in GNP. Physician fees increased by 12.8 percent in 1975 and 11.4 percent in 1976, both higher than any time previously in history. Much of the increase in costs is attributable to waste, inefficiency, and the lack of effective planning in the health care system. Self-regulation by providers has resulted in an excess of hospital beds, overproduction of medical equipment, and unnecessary construction of health facilities. Only consumer health planning can make a difference in improving health care delivery to all.

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS
P.O. Box 2468
Champaign, Illinois 61820

I want to join CCHCC and continue to receive the CCHCC NEWSLETTER:

☐ \$1-10 membership, depending on your ability to pay. Please pay as much as you can.

My Check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

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