

HEALTH CARE CONSUMER

Summer

Newsletter of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers

1993

Local Consumers Carry Message to Springfield

"No Health Care, No Peace!"

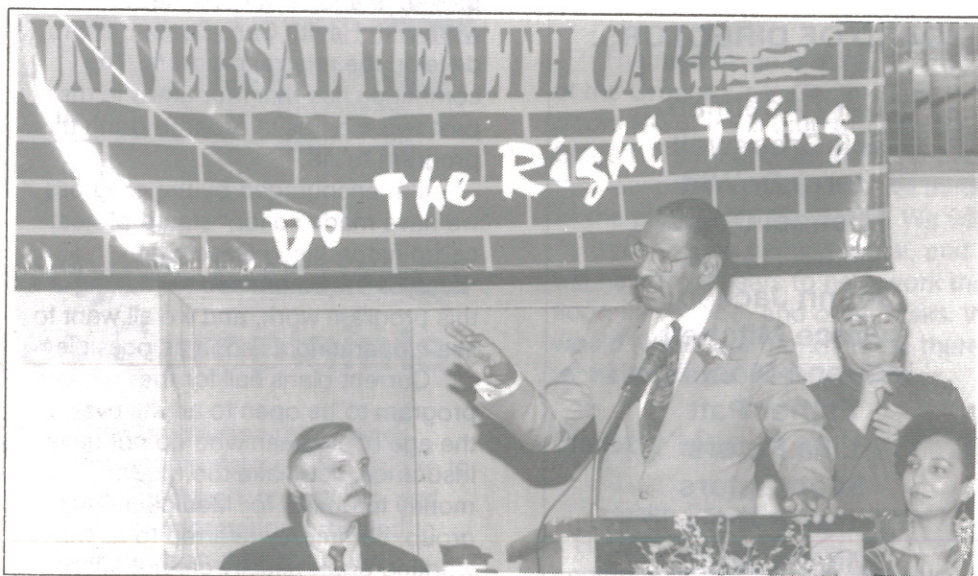
That was the battle cry as members of the Health Care Consumers joined with over 1,000 other citizens during Health Care Action Day in Springfield on April 22.

Organized by the statewide Campaign for Better Health Care, the event drew activists from the length and breadth of Illinois. Cars and buses converged from a total of 45 cities and towns, including Aurora, Belleville, Champaign, Chicago, Danville, Decatur, East Alton, East St. Louis, Granite City, Peoria, Rockford, Rock Island, Urbana, and dozens of smaller communities.

The common goal of all who came was simple: to let our elected officials know that nothing less than single-payer, universal health care would suffice to cure the ills of the current system.

The day began with an 11:00 AM briefing at the Howlett Building, where representatives of the Campaign distributed information on PAC contributions made by the State Medical Society to individual legislators during last fall's elections.

Participants then moved to the Capitol Rotunda for a 12:30 rally, where dozens of state senators and representatives attacked the Medical Society and insurance industry's efforts to defeat the Illinois Health



U.S. Representative John Conyers, Jr. speaks to local activists, members, volunteers, and friends at the Health Care Consumers' 16th Annual Awards Dinner at the Chancellor Inn in Champaign. (Story on page 4)

Children's Health Committee Forming in Champaign County

For the past three months we have been working to establish a Children's Health Task Force. Our decision to form this task force is in response to growing concerns, both within Champaign County and the nation, over the steady increase in child poverty and the lack of children's health insurance. So far, the group has identified immunizations and nutrition as priorities for study and action. Initially we have been in contact with members and clergy in the rural areas of the county to get their opinion on how these issues affect their community. Presently the group's main focus is on making school breakfasts (a federally funded program) available in all public schools in the county. If you are interested in this issue, or have questions, please contact Ruth at 352-6533.

Continued on page 6

HEALTH CARE CONSUMER

is published quarterly by the Champaign County Health Care Consumers, a grassroots not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring accessible, affordable health care for all.

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Dental Referral Project Moves Forward

The Health Care Consumers' initiative to increase access to dental care for the low-income community of Champaign County is making steady progress. This initiative, known as the Dental Referral Project, will establish a program whereby low-income residents can receive dental care at reduced rates from participating providers.

As reported in the last newsletter, Health Care Consumers surveyed over 600 low-income residents to determine their dental needs. This survey, released on April 7, spurred the development of a Dental Advisory Committee, composed of local dental providers and community leaders, to work with Health Care Consumers to develop the referral program. The committee has met four times in the past two months in order to bring this program to life.

"I'm encouraged by the progress we have made so far," stated project coordinator Jason Gascoyne. "Everyone is committed to making this program work, and we all want to see it operating as soon as possible."

Current plans call for the program to be open to adults over the age of eighteen who do not have insurance, yet make too much money to qualify for Medicaid. This group, commonly referred to as the working poor, usually cannot afford

to pay for dental services out of their own pocket. As a result, they either go without services, or receive their services at Frances Nelson Health Center. Frances Nelson is also the only place where Medicaid recipients can be assured of receiving care, so the dentist there is overwhelmed with patients. In the month of March, Frances Nelson saw over 500 dental patients. The referral program would allow for some of these working poor patients to be seen by private dentists for a reduced rate, decreasing the patient load at Frances Nelson, and thereby increasing the number of Medicaid patients who can receive treatment.

Although questions concerning the details of how the program will operate and what services it will provide are still being discussed, it appears the program will be very comprehensive. The current discussions include provision of a full range of services, including emergency, preventive, restorative, and dentures, although the latter still requires a great deal of negotiation before it is solidified. Discussions are also still underway concerning what the cost of services will be to the patient. "We still would like to have the system in place and operating at full capacity by this fall," commented Gascoyne.

New Benefit for CCHCC Members

Health Care Consumers has contracted with a company called Affinity to offer our members and supporters significant discounts on long-distance telephone service, as well as an opportunity to support Health Care Consumers. By purchasing in volume, Affinity obtains its service at a major discount, and passes along savings of 5% to 35% over the most readily available AT&T, MCI, and Sprint programs. Affinity

then pays 8% of your long-distance bill as a donation to Health Care Consumers.

Affinity offers easy 1 + dialing (no access codes) and guarantees the quality of its service to be the equal of major carriers. This is a unique opportunity for you to save money and support the work of Health Care Consumers at the same time. For more information, or to switch your home or business to Affinity Fund service, call John Soloman at 352-6533.



Sharing views on health care reform at the Health Care Consumers' 16th Annual Awards Dinner are (l to r): State Representative Laurel Prussing, Champaign County Board member Stephen Brand, and Campaign for Better Health Care Executive Director Jim Duffett. (Story on page 4)

CMS Renews Biodyne Contract Despite Employee Complaints

Despite many complaints from state employees and a resolution unanimously passed by the University of Illinois Faculty Senate, Central Management Services has renewed its contract with Illinois Biodyne for management of mental health benefits. CMS cited cost as the overriding factor in its decision and also stated that, in previous years, employees had abused the system. No figures were offered to back up this claim, and CMS admits that it had no system in place to monitor the use of these benefits.

Locally, consumers continue to be concerned about the limited number of providers who are part of the Biodyne network, and Biodyne's insistence on behaviorist treatment even when that is not an appropriate therapy. As of now, only one psychiatrist serves Champaign County, and that doctor commutes from Decatur. Contrary to Biodyne's claims, patients find it almost impossible to get approval to see providers outside the network.

The Senate resolution cited employee complaints, CMS' failure to oversee Biodyne's operations, and the lack of information provided to employees about benefits and Biodyne's methods of operation. The Senate called on CMS to seek new management for mental health benefits, and to reimburse employees for unjustified expenses incurred because of Biodyne's policies. The Senate also directed their representatives to raise these issues with state-wide faculty working groups.

Because neither Biodyne nor CMS shows any intention of correcting these problems, the U of I Senate Benefits Committee is recommending that employees needing these benefits switch out of the Quality Care plan. Providers and consumers are working together for legislation to regulate the operation of managed care companies like Biodyne.

CCHCC Briefs

Board Elections

Congratulations are in order for Grace Mitchell and Joann Jackson -- our two new board members. We are also pleased to announce the re-election of Gary Adelman, Bill Cresswell, Clare Harlow, and Esther Patt for two year terms. A full list of the current board members may be found at the far left on page two.

Bingo

The next bingo is June 12, 1993 at the Urbana Civic Center. The doors will open at 5:00 pm and the bingo will start at 7:00. We now have the new paper games, and we think all the players will be happy. We will be trying a new paper special, and will have volunteers to help work the floor, serve food, and other tasks. We would like all our friends to be there to make this our best bingo ever.

Happy Hour

Health Care Consumers will host a Happy Hour on Friday, July 16, beginning at 5:30 at our offices in the Lincoln Building, 44 Main St., Champaign. This event offers you a chance to meet other members, board, and staff, and enjoy the food and drink provided. The last Happy Hour, in February, was a great success, so please plan to attend and bring a guest. A donation of \$5 is suggested.

Office Wish List

Health Care Consumers needs your help in filling a number of office needs. Anyone having used equipment or material they can donate is encouraged to give us a call. Current needs include: an electronic typewriter, a copier, a postal meter, a laser printer, desks, chairs, computers, an easel, and live plants. Thanks for your help.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

Do The Right Thing

CCHCC Awards Dinner Honors Local, National Leaders

"If the administration doesn't approve this kind of program [single-payer], I'm afraid we have elected a one-term president," stated U.S. Rep. John Conyers, keynote speaker at Health Care Consumers' 16th Annual Awards Dinner. Conyers provided Health Care Consumers' members with an insider's view of how health care reform is being looked at in Washington.

The theme of this year's dinner was, "Universal Health Care: Do the Right Thing." Imani Bazzell, Acting Director of the Health Care Consumers, stated the theme was "a celebration of an administration that is serious about health care reform." For those in attendance, the event was a chance to learn what reform looks like from "inside the beltway."

Rep. Conyers was the recipient of Health Care Consumers' **Legislator of the Year Award**, in recognition of his sponsorship of the single-payer universal health care bill in the House of Representatives. Conyers, a 15 term Democrat from Detroit, has made social justice and economic development the focal points of his career in public service. Among his successes are the Martin Luther King Holiday Bill, the Racial Justice Act, the Voter Registration Reform Act, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Conyers urged those in attendance to push Clinton and Congress to stand up to the special interests, and support a single-payer system.

For many, the highlight of the evening came when longtime Health Care Consumers Director Mike Doyle was honored with the inaugural **Mike**



A packed room listens as U.S. Rep. John Conyers, Jr. explains his single-payer, universal health care legislation at the Health Care Consumers' Awards Dinner.

Doyle Activist of the Year Award.

This award will honor individuals for their efforts to achieve social justice in the community. "It was a complete surprise," stated Doyle. "I am honored to have this award named after me."

Other award winners included:

Larry Johnson, DDS, who received the **Harry Baker Community Service Award** for his support of A Woman's Place through his dental practice.

The Campaign for Better Health Care received the **Leadership Award** for their outstanding work in leading the fight for a single-payer universal health care system, at both the state and national level.

The **Henrietta DeBoer Volunteer of the Year Award** was presented to Bettina Chapman, in recognition of her outstanding commitment and

willingness to volunteer generous amounts of her time.

The **Dr. Elsie Field Provider of the Year Award** was presented to Dr. Frank Wrestler for his years of practice here in the community. Dr. Wrestler has always made himself accessible to his patients, works with them to understand the health care system, and has always gone beyond the call of duty to help his patients.

Consumer Reports received the **Excellence in Health Care Reporting Award** for their 3-part series looking at the health care crisis and possible solutions to the problem.

The coveted **Golden Bedpan Award**, for the greatest disservice to health care consumers, went to Biodyne Corporation and the Illinois Department of Central Management Services for their butchering of mental health benefits for state employees (see story on page 3).

Dinner Patrons:

Health Care Consumers wishes to extend an extra special thanks to all the friends listed here for helping to underwrite the cost of tickets for our fixed and low-income members. Each year, dozens of members who would not otherwise be able to attend are fortunate to join us as a result of the generosity of our dinner patrons.

Thanks again!

JOYCE AMACHER
JAN ANDERSON
JOHN ANDERSON
JOAN APPERSON
DAVID AUSTIN
PHYLLIS BALLARD
MAUREEN BANKS
CYNTHIA BARNES
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CLAIRE WILCOX
LYNNE WILKINSON
MARGE WINKELHAKE
KAREN WOOLEY
JOANN ZIMMER
BRUCE ZIMMERMAN



Health Care Consumers' volunteers Dorothy Utley and Bettina Chapman are joined by East Central Illinois Committee member Paula Enstrom to deliver thousands of fake "special interest" \$100 bills to Governor Edgar's office.

Lobby Day

from page 1

Security Act of 1993 (HB 1459).

These special interests have consistently opposed any meaningful health care reform, and remain the single largest obstacle to accessible, affordable health care.

Following the rally, a procession formed to take the message of "Health Care for All" to Governor Edgar's office. Members of the Champaign contingent brought thousands of fake \$100 bills, representing the PAC contributions of the Medical Society and insurance industry. Citizen lobbyists placed these bills in large money sacks as they filed past the governor's office, to let him know that we are tired of these special interests buying off the reforms that are needed to alleviate the suffering of Illinois residents.

From the governor's office, the volunteers moved to the third floor of the Capitol building, to begin the task of lobbying individual legislators in support of HB 1459. This bill would mandate a statewide, universal access health care system by January 1, 1996. While leaving the details of implementation to a bipartisan commission, the bill specifically required:

- * Universal access to a full range of preventive, acute, and long-term services;

- * Improved quality of health care services to Illinois residents;
- * Portability of coverage regardless of changes in job status;
- * Local and regional consumer participation in decisions about health care delivery, financing, and provider supply;
- * Controls on capital and overall expenditures;
- * Global budgeting for health care providers; and
- * Elimination of unnecessary duplication of health care facilities and services.

At the start of the day, 52 of the necessary 60 representatives had committed to voting for the bill. As the citizen lobbyists buttonholed their

respective legislators, that number began to grow, and it was clear that the pressure was on. At 2:00, the count stood at 57; by 2:30, based on what the legislators told their constituents, we had the required 60 votes.

After a twenty minute floor debate, the roll call began. When it finished, the citizens of Illinois had once again been betrayed by those they trust to represent their interests. Three Democratic representatives who had previously indicated their support of HB 1459 (two of whom were actually cosponsors!) reneged on their commitments to their constituents, and failed to vote yes.

Harold Murphy of Markham (one of the cosponsors) voted present, while Judy Erwin of Chicago (also a cosponsor) and Jeff Schoenberg of Skokie, both of whom voted for the bill in the House Health Care Committee, actually voted against HB 1459 on the floor. Their defections left the bill with only 57 votes in favor, three short of the 60 needed.

Whether these reversals reflected genuine crises of conscience, or the less-than-subtle manipulations of the medical and insurance industries, the unfortunate fact is that Illinois citizens must once again bear the brunt of our grossly inequitable and increasingly unaffordable health care system, at least until next year.

With each new revelation concerning Bill Clinton's long-awaited health care plan, it becomes increasingly clear that it will do little to remedy the runaway costs or two-tiered stratification of our current system. What it **will** do, however, is leave an opening for individual states to take the lead in forging new solutions that **can** work.

The spirit and determination demonstrated by the 1,000 plus volunteers and health care advocates at this year's Health Care Action Day guarantees that Illinois will continue to be at the forefront of this battle. We will force next year's gubernatorial and legislative candidates to declare their allegiances: either to the fat cats and special interests who continue to profit at the expense of the medical and economic health of the public; or to the citizens of Illinois, and the cutting edge of health care reform.

HOW THEY VOTED:

East Central Illinois Legislators and HB 1459

Voting YES:

John Dunn (D-Decatur)
Laurel Prussing (D-Urbana)

Voting NO:

Bill Black (R-Danville)
Bill Brady (R-Bloomington)
Tim Johnson (R-Urbana)
Duane Noland (R-B. Mound)
Robert Olson (R-Broadwell)
Dan Rutherford (R-Pontiac)
Mike Weaver (R-Ashmore)

Dinner Volunteers

Health Care Consumers thanks the following volunteers for helping with our annual Awards Dinner in March. We couldn't have done it without you!

Gary Adelman
Martha Bailey
Mark Baron
Judy Checker
Anna Clayton
Bill Cresswell
Jerry DeWitt
Kit Donohue
Jim Duffett
Keith Ervin
Tiffany Fry
Nancy Greenwalt
Clare Harlow
Jim Hayes
Patricia Heiser
John Lee Johnson
Shirley Lux
Jeff Machota
Susan McGrath
Marlene Moshage
Esther Patt
Lilia Peters
Scott Peters
David Rein
Mimi Rivera
Elizabeth Scholebo
Mamie Smith
Fannie Taylor
Maurice Verplank
Jan Wehmer
Jean Weir
Janice Wilson

Volunteer Corner

Congratulations to Bettina Chapman for winning the **Volunteer of the Year Award** at our Awards Dinner (story on p. 4). We are very grateful to her for all the time she dedicates. Also, thanks to all who helped with Medicaid data entry, especially Ellie Pritchard, Bettina, and the Alternative Spring Break volunteers.

Mable Coombs, Mamie Smith, Leonard Wirges, Dorothy Utley, and Bettina also participated in our Lobby Day (story on p. 1), where we rallied for better health care and met with representatives Laurel Prussing and Tim Johnson. If you would like to be involved in exciting events and help out with different tasks, call Ruth (352-6533) for an interview, so we can match your interests and skills to our job descriptions. Our main needs are data entry, updating of membership volunteer codes, and help with our summer Bingo on June 12.

Tenth Annual Summer Canvass Underway

For the tenth year in a row, Health Care Consumers' door canvass is off to a flying start. The annual community outreach and education campaign began on May 17, and the initial response has been most gratifying. "With the Clinton Administration's health care plan due any day now, the public awareness of the problems we face is higher than ever," according to Wynn Newberry, Canvass Director. "People all over the county are responding to these concerns with renewed support for the work of the Health Care Consumers." The canvass is a vital link in the growth and development of the Health Care Consumers. Please be sure to show your support when the canvass knocks on **your** door.

Awards Dinner BUSINESS DONORS

Rick Orr Florist

Schnuck's
Supermarket

Sleeping Beauty
Flower Shop

New VISTAs Join Health Care Consumer Staff

Four new VISTA volunteers have joined the staff of Health Care Consumers. VISTA, Volunteers In Service to America, is a program of the United States ACTION agency, and functions as a domestic peace corps. VISTA volunteers are recruited to help work on solutions to problems that arise from poverty.

The Health Care Consumers are currently working on two issues in which the VISTA volunteers are placing their efforts. These issues are access to dental care for low-income consumers (story on page 2), and children's health concerns (story on page 1). The main focuses for children's health will be nutrition and immunizations.

Our new VISTA volunteers are Jeff Fowler, Lynn Guidry, Ruth Michaelis, and Carol Thompson. If you are interested in either of these issues, please call our office at (217) 352-6533 and get involved!

CCHCC MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please clip out and return with your membership dues.)

☐ Enclosed is my check
for \$_____

☐ Please bill my credit
card.

Membership Levels:

\$50 - Friends of CCHCC
\$36 - Family Membership/Adopt-A-Senior
\$25 - Individual Membership
\$15 - Senior Citizens/Students/Fixed Income

Check one: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard Expiration Date: ____/____
Account number: _____

Contributions to CCHCC are tax deductible.

Please return to: CCHCC, 44 E. Main, Suite 208, Champaign, IL 61820

Alternative Payroll Deduction Plan Celebrates Successful First Year

Sky rocketing health care costs, affordable housing, a deteriorating environment, equality under the law, AIDS, and high utility rates concern us all. Now seven new organizations have joined the Public Interest Fund of Illinois to expand the choices for donors wishing to support the valuable work of these public interest and social change organizations. These new organizations are the Chicago Recycling Coalition, the

public interest groups in Illinois with a mechanism for participating in payroll deduction campaigns. Payroll deductions are a very easy way for people to give donations to organizations they wish to support through their workplace. This year was the first time the Fund participated in the State and University Employees Combined Appeal, which is the state's charitable campaign. The Fund was highly successful in raising money to support the work of its member organizations.

Champaign County Health Care Consumers would like to thank everyone that participated in making this first campaign such a great success. We especially appreciate those of you who gave donations to the organization through your workplace. Next year, if you work for the State of Illinois, the University of Illinois, or Champaign County, please consider renewing or joining the Health Care Consumers through the Public Interest Fund of Illinois in the fall charitable campaign. This year we are also kicking off our efforts to join other campaigns as well. If you work for a business, and are interested in finding out how to give to the Public Interest Fund of Illinois through your workplace, please call Chris Stimer at (217) 352-6533. We need your help, and appreciate your support!

**The Fund now has
twenty-six
organizations
across the state
working to improve
the lives of the
citizens of Illinois.**

Crossroads Fund, the Illinois Hunger Coalition, the Illinois League of Women Voters, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the NAACP, the Illinois State Conference, and the Prairie AIDS Foundation. The Fund now has twenty-six organizations across the state working to improve the lives of the citizens of Illinois.

Champaign County Health Care Consumers is just one of the six local organizations that are members of the Public Interest Fund of Illinois. Locally, the Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union, the Prairie AIDS Foundation, the Community Recycling Center, the Illinois Center for Citizen Involvement, and WEFT Community Radio also participate in the Fund.

The Public Interest Fund of Illinois was established to provide



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