Winter

Newsletter of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers

1994

Cultural Barriers to Care Targeted by "Opening Doors" Project

The Health Care Consumers is proud to announce that it is one of only eleven organizations nationwide to recieve a grant under the Opening Doors Program, which is jointly sponsored by the Robert Woods Johnson and Kaiser Family Fund Foundations.

Moving to fill a gap that is not addressed by any of the current health care reform proposals, these two leading health care foundations designed the Opening Doors Program to respond to the inequities arising when health insurance

alone does not guarantee adequate health care. Grant recipients were selected from a pool of more than 800 applicants, and will undertake innovative projects aimed at reducing the social and cultural barriers that hinder access to care.

"Opening Doors in Champaign County" is a three-year demonstration project, designed to eliminate barriers to reproductive health care for African-American women. The project will present a multi-pronged approach to a deeply entrenched problem. This approach joins African-American

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Consumer Input Key to Frances Nelson's Future

Over the entire 17 year history of CCHCC, we have always sought to support and work with the Frances Nelson Health Center to ensure access to quality health care for low-income residents. For many in Champaign County, the Center provides the only access to health care.

In recent weeks, however, federal authorities from Region V of the Department of Health and Human Services have threatened to cut off more than \$400,000 in federal funds to the Center. Distressed about certain actions by these federal officials, and determined that local consumers be



Rob Kilbury, Co-Chair of the Campaign for Better Health Care, joins with CCHCC in Springfield to ask Rep. Ewing for a meeting on health care. (Story on page 5)

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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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Unit 4 to Consider Expanding School Breakfasts

Mark your calendars for February 14 (and not just because it's Valentine's Day). On that day, the Children's Health Committee will make an informational presentation about the expansion of the School Breakfast Program in Champaign schools at the Unit 4 School Board meeting. That meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Unit 4 administration building, 703 S. New St. in Champaign.

The board members will hear testimony from us, as well as community members and organizations with whom we have been working. They will then leave the issue on the table for public scrutiny, and make an official decision at a later board meeting. It is encouraging that the Unit 4 administration, including the Business Manager who oversees the program, has taken an interest in seeing the program expanded. He made that position public at the January board meeting, and has expressed interest in our assistance in implementing the program.

Your support and enthusiasm about the health and nutritional status of children would help to sway the board as well; public testimony is welcome and encouraged at board meetings. Speaking with your child's

principal or teacher about the program would also be beneficial. You may call the office at 352-6533 for more information on the program and the situation in Champaign.

The committee continues to work on other child nutrition programs throughout Champaign County. The committee is working closely with the Illinois Hunger Coalition to develop programs and promotional campaigns in needed areas.

A new staff person, Laura Kurre. has made numerous contacts throughout rural Champaign County on the issues of school breakfast and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), which provides meals to children in the summer when school is out. On January 25, members of the Children's Health Committee traveled to Effingham for an informational session on SFSP. Accompanying them were representatives from the Champaign Housing Authority and the Triple C. To function, the program needs organizational sponsorship by groups such as these. A mandatory session for interested sponsors will be held in Springfield in March.

Committee members have met with teachers, daycare workers, school officials, parents, and other community members in Rantoul,

The children of Champaign County need your help!

The health of children throughout the nation, state, and county is rapidly deteriorating due to lack of access to preventive care, good nutrition, and medical insurance for children. The Children's Health Committee at CCHCC is working to address some of these problems, but we need your help.

You could help simply by meeting with one of our members to talk about your ideas and concerns, or you may want to join the committee. Speaking with your child's teachers, principal, and your district's administration and school board members about the need for better nutrition in the schools is also very beneficial; we can send you information to distribute to those individuals.

If you live in Champaign, come to the Unit 4 School Board Meeting on February 14 (see main article). Call us if you want to attend and need a ride.

On February 11-13, join us at Gordyville USA, the auction and flea market held in Sidney. Volunteers and committee members will be there sharing information and talking with rural community members. If you'd like to volunteer, let us know, or stop by our table to give support. If you have an artistic bent, you could help develop and create flyers and other promotional items for the different programs the committee is working on. If you would like to be involved in our work, please call Laura or Jennifer at 352-6533.

CCHCC Briefs

Board Election

It's time once again to elect at-large members to the Health Care Consumers Board of Directors. The ballot is enclosed with this newsletter. Please take time to read the candidates' statements, make your selections, and mail the ballot back to us. The deadline for receiving ballots is March 14. The results will be announced at our annual awards dinner on March 19.

Staff Changes

There are some new faces on the Health Care Consumers staff whom we would like to introduce. Catherine Crandall joined our staff in September, and is serving as the organizer for our Universal Health Care Committee. Also new to our staff is Laura Kurre. Laura joined us in November, and serves as the rural organizer for the Children's Health Project. We also wish to acknowledge the contributions made by two staff members who have left the organization. Zenita Belle worked with the Children's Health Project, while Carol Thompson, who spent time on both the Consumer Health Hotline and the Dental Project, contributed her experience and expertise by helping expand and improve our semi-annual bingos.

Friday Forum Starts Spring Series

Health Care Consumers is proud to be working with Friday Forum to present a series on health care reform during the 1993-94 academic year. The fall series was an overwhelming success. We hope to continue the trend with the spring series, titled "REthinking Health: what are we reforming?" The series begins February 4, and runs through April 29. It is held in the University YMCA's Latzer Hall, which is located at 1001 S. Wright in Champaign. The speaker is introduced at 12:15. We encourage all interested people to attend this exciting series.

Committee Gears Up

The Universal Health Care
Committee is working hard on a
number of fronts. Members have
chosen two areas on which to focus. A
public forum on health care reform
with Congressman Ewing has proved
harder than anticipated to set up (see
article on page 4), but the committee
continues to pursue our voice in
democracy.

Public education is the other area which committee members have resolved to support. The committee will sponsor a speaker's bureau training session on February 19, in order to send members to speak on health care reform before any interested groups.

Ways for consumers to get more involved include the Phone Action Network, the Letters to the Editor campaign, postcard campaigns, and more. Please call and get involved!

More Bingo Fun

Almost 200 people braved the cold and helped CCHCC raise over \$750 at our first-ever winter Bingo, held January 8 at the Urbana Civic Center. Prizes totaling \$2250 were given away during the evening, as well as door prizes. A highlight of the evening was the introduction of CCHCC staffer Catherine Crandall as caller, filling in for Mike Doyle for three games. Thanks to everyone who helped make the event a success, including the local business donors. We hope for better weather for the next Bingo.



Phone-A-Thon Soars

CCHCC's annual Phone-A-Thon, held between September 27 and October 7, raised over \$17,000 in pledges, the second-highest total in our history. Scores of volunteers (listed on page 6) and staff members participated over the eight evenings of phoning, while over 25 businesses (listed below) donated food, drinks and prizes. This year's event focused on the issue of health care reform and the Clinton plan. Hundreds of members sent postcards to their representatives urging them to work for a plan that is universal in coverage, comprehensive in benefits, and progressively financed. We thank all of the volunteers, organizations, and businesses who made the 1993 Phone-A-Thon a success.

Phone-A-Thon Sponsors:

Art Theatre Aunt Sonya's Blockbuster Video **Camelot Music** Coslow's C-U Theatre Co. Garcia's Pizza Grandy's Grog's Pizza **Horizon Bookstore** Jane Addams Bookstore J.C. Penny Jerry's IGA **Kemmerer Bottling** Land of Mexico Lil Porgy's Marketplace Cinema Musicland **Old Towne Video** Olive Garden Pages For All Ages **Periscope Music** Powerhouse Gym **Record Service Rogards** Subway Village Inn

(217) 328-0165

That's the phone number of Congressman Tom Ewing's Urbana office. Call him and tell him how you feel about national health care reform. It may be your only chance, because so far he hasn't been willing to take the time to listen to his constituents. Recently, however, he may have begun to learn that he can't ignore the voters forever.

With only one day's notice, carloads of Health Care Consumers made the 110 mile trip to Springfield in order to confront Ewing. Members of the Universal Health Care Committee were angry to have learned that our representative had refused to meet with constituents in his own district at a public forum on health care, but was taking part in a tightly controlled, so-called town meeting in Springfield (outside of his district) to discuss the issue.

At a rally outside of the Sangamon County Building, participants joined with Campaign for Better Health Care members from Peoria, Decatur, Springfield, Washington, and Champaign-Urbana, chanting and carrying signs to get the point across to our elected representatives.

After the group was told that there was no more space available inside the carefully contrived town meeting, shouts of "Let us in!" echoed through the streets until the doors were opened and ralliers were granted access.

After the event, Ewing attempted once again to avoid his constituents by sneaking out a side door. Fortunately, committee members were experienced in foiling the tactics of unresponsive politicians, and the evasive Mr. Ewing was caught by Miss Mamie Smith, Marion Gushee, and Bettina Chapman. The trio asked him to commit to a meeting with constituents in his district before January 30, but he rather vehemently declined.



CCHCC representatives join with other members of the Campaign for Better Health Care to seek a meeting between Ewing and his constituents. (This and photo on page 1 courtesy of the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities)

CALL TODAY

Tom Ewing, are you afraid to hear from your constituents?

Call Congressman Ewing

For the past six months, the Champaign County Health Care Consumers has asked Mr. Ewing to attend a public forum on health care reform, where he would have a chance to hear his constituents' views. He has been unwilling to do that. To send a clear message that constituents demand to be heard, we will flood Mr. Ewing's office with calls urging him to meet.

Generate as many calls as you can, and ask friends and family to participate!

What is the message?

Give your name, address, and mention any organization you represent, and your membership in the Champaign County Health Care Consumers.

Tell him why you are calling and what you want, by saying:

- 1) "I am calling to urge Congressman Ewing to attend a Health Care Consumers public forum on health care reform."
- 2) "It is important for Mr. Ewing to hear from us on this issue, not just from special interests."
- 3) "Thank you for your time. I am looking forward to hearing the Congressman's response."

Congressman Tom Ewing (217) 328-0165 - Urbana

To join the Champaign County Health Care Consumers' Phone Action Network, call (217) 352-6533

Frances Nelson

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more actively involved, the Health Care Consumers intervened with federal officials.

After an emergency meeting on Martin Luther King's Birthday, the Health Care Consumers contacted Region V Director Elaine Weiss about the following concerns:

1) The initial decision by HHS to veto the representation of CCHCC on the seven member Task Force.

As part of the grant review process, HHS required Frances Nelson to establish a Task Force, designed to assist the Center to reconstitute their Board of Directors. In a News-Gazette article on Sunday. January 16, Mr. Nick Lewis was quoted as saying that HHS had rejected CCHCC Executive Director Imani Bazzell. Further, Mr. Lewis indicated that HHS would not provide a written explanation as to why Ms. Bazzell had been rejected. This rejection is absolutely unacceptable, given that HHS guidelines presented to the Center specified: "(The Task Force) must be comprised of recognized leaders representing the following types of organizations: government, financial, educational, social services and cognizant community groups..." (emphasis added)

As an 8,000 member health care consumer organization, which has been active in this community since 1977, CCHCC is uniquely suited to serve on the Task Force. By rejecting Bazzell, Mr. Lewis and HHS failed to recognize CCHCC's legitimate representation of consumers, particularly those low-income consumers who use the center. Although we have since been informed by other HHS staff members that Mr. Lewis was wrong, the very fact that it appeared in our local newspaper underscores how poorly HHS has handled this whole process. More importantly, it raises serious questions about the decision making process within HHS.

2) The composition of the Task Force, as defined by HHS, undermines federal regulations, which mandate that at least half the

UPDATE

As we go to press, we are happy to announce that progress has been made. Due to pressure from the Health Care Consumers and other supporters of the Center, our Executive Director, Imani Bazzell, along with the other appointees previously rejected by HHS, have been reconfirmed on the Task Force.

There are three immediate objectives:

- * develop a credible process for establishing the membership of the Frances Nelson Health Center's Board of Directors that meets federal requirements:
- * reconstitute the Frances
 Nelson Health Center's Board
 of Directors so as to broaden
 the representation of
 community groups, and include
 expertise within the fields of
 health service delivery, primary
 care, and fiscal/grants
 management; and
- review and consider any required by-law changes.

The Special Task Force will begin its work immediately. The work will be accomplished in two phases, with the first to be completed by February 15, and the second by March 15, 1994.

Approved Task Force members include: Lonnie Clark, Imani Bazzell, Steve Brand, William Creswell, C. Daniel Eaton, Rev. Steve Jackson, John Lee Johnson, Cecile Steinberg, and Frank Wrestler.

seats on the board of a community health center be held by its users or their representatives.

A basic premise of federally funded community health centers is that the users should have a major voice in decisions affecting the center. Even HHS staff have acknowledged that the "governing body must broadly represent the area served, the users of its services, and community groups."

CCHCC is concerned that the composition of the Task Force, as mandated by HHS, lacks adequate input from the users of Frances Nelson. If the Center's clients are to be represented by the new governing body (ie., a reconstituted board), then the Task Force overseeing the new board's formation **also** must be representative of those people most affected by the Task Force's proposals and recommendations.

3) Inappropriate actions of HHS officials in handling this issue.

We believe that the HHS staff involved in the review of Frances Nelson have acted inappropriately during this process. For example, an HHS staff member made inflammatory remarks to the local news media, with a profoundly negative impact. In addition, the process that was supposedly imposed on our community to resolve issues at the health center has had just the opposite effect. In less than a month, this process has backfired and become a whole new quagmire. It is our understanding that the sudden reversal of the decision to reject Ms. Bazzell's nomination to the Task Force is not an isolated instance. Based on comments from various people in our community, HHS staff members have repeatedly given conflicting information to different people, causing great confusion. Misinformation from HHS staff members has been the source of numerous rumors and accusations. making it even more difficult to address any real issues.

The imposition of unrealistic deadlines established by HHS staff.

CCHCC first became alarmed at what HHS was trying to do on Christmas Eve, when the headlines announced that the Center had to establish the Task Force for reconstituting its board by December 31. Although we understand that HHS officials had met with the Center's board four days earlier, there is a general consensus locally that the timetable established was unreasonable, particularly with many individuals out of town over the holidays. Furthermore, additional deadlines and threats regarding loss of funding, such as those made by Mr.

Frances Nelson

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Lewis in the News-Gazette on January 16, have created a climate of fear, and generated a crisis atmosphere. Unfortunately, this type of atmosphere inhibits sound decision making, and provides a convenient excuse for excluding community input. The most disturbing aspect is that HHS staff members have not provided an explanation as to why everything had to happen with such urgency.

Given these concerns, CCHCC called on HHS to refrain from inappropriate actions in addressing issues surrounding the Center, and that they:

- cease making inflammatory and threatening public comments;
- explain all decisions in writing; and
- negotiate with the legally responsible governing body and refrain from dealing behind closed doors with outside parties.

Frances Nelson is an irreplaceable provider of health care services for thousands of low-income people. Decisions regarding the Center's funding should not be made in haste, with erroneous and unverified information, or without more broadly based input from those affected. We believe that few decisions would have a more profound impact on the poor.

CCHCC has pledged to continue our organizing efforts on behalf of, and in cooperation with, low-income consumers, in order to ensure quality health care and local control.

Volunteer Profile Bettina Chapman

To Bettina Chapman, CCHCC's 1993 Volunteer of the Year, there is no more important cause than health care reform. Perhaps this is the reason she dedicates over 20 hours a week to the organization, working on everything from the Consumer Health Hotline to the Universal Health Care Committee. But it's more than just the importance of accessible health care that makes her so committed. Bettina feels empowered by being active. She believes it's the best therapy for illness and misfortune! Bettina also volunteers at the Humane Society, U of I Law School, Land of

Lincoln, A Woman's Place, the Virginia Theatre, and the C-U Day Care Center in Champaign.

Bettina was born in Kansas City, Missouri, to a family of five children. Because her father was a minister, she moved frequently throughout her childhood. For 13 years, she taught high school, covering such subjects as biology, history, and geography. She has also taught preschool, which she finds more enjoyable because the



children are so loving and eager to learn. She settled in Champaign-Urbana in 1980, after living in more than 9 different states.

When Bettina isn't volunteering, she enjoys baking decorative cakes, playing piano, sewing, shopping, and watching court room drama. But most of all, she loves to play with her adorable kitty "ShortStuff," and warns that if she is not home, "he will answer the phone!"

1993 Phone-A-Thon Volunteers

Grace Adams
Gary Adelman
Allen Hall
Alpha Angels
Marty & Ed Apy
Marjorie Booth
Alja Brown
Vera Capan
Eddie Lee Carter
Bettina Chapman
Mei Leng Chong
Anna Clayton
Bill Creswell

Mary Dean
Delta Delta Delta
Mike Doyle
Belden Fields
Mildred Flynn
Blanche Fryer
Genevieve Forson
Charles Garrison
Nancy Greenwalt
Marion Gushee
Clare Harlow
Thelma Hasler
Eugenia Hilligoss

Kendall James
Veva Luckey
Shirley Lux
Bobby Mauoane
Garnett Morris
Marlene Moshage
Esther Patt
Lilia Peters
Delores Phillips
Marilyn Pratt
Jennifer Putman
Dave Rein
Larraine Sapp

Glenn & Elizabeth Scholebo Mamie Smith Dorothy Utley Linda Van Roosendaal Maurice Verplank Volunteer Illini Projects Janus Wehmer Juanita Williams Faye Wilson Janice & Curtis Wilson Sarah Wiseman

Thanks Again!

Opening Doors

from page 1

women, across economic class, with four health care institutions in the Champaign-Urbana metro area, in order to address this important issue.

Health Care Consumers will develop and implement the program utilizing four concepts:

- 1) There are three major factors which maintain barriers to care: Individual attitudes and behaviors of providers and staff; Institutional policies and practices, regardless of intent; and Internalized barriers among African-American women, due to unconscious acceptance of pervasive stereotypes.
- 2) Organizing African-American women across economic class is critical for a holistic perspective.
- 3) Education for Action -- a training model to develop change

Join the Work for Health Care
Access!
Become a part of CCHCC's
Consumer Health
HOTLINE

Volunteer Advocates Needed!

Assist local residents in resolving problems, questions, and complaints about health care services and fees.

Group training session required. For more info: call Ruth at 352-6533

teams among African-American women, and within collaborating organizations, dedicated to eliminating barriers.

4) A "Triple R" approach to the work, which emphasizes: **R**ecognition (of barriers), **R**esistance (to barriers), and **R**e-creation (of alternative patterns and policies).

The Community Change Team will focus on developing and implementing strategies to reduce internalized barriers, while the Institutional Change Teams' work will center on reduction of individual staff barriers. These Community and Institutional Change Teams will collaborate to create the Access Audit for Change, a tool to provide a system for identifying elements of institutional barriers, while targeting programs, services, and advocates which support a commitment to change.

The collaborating organizations will each have a staff person designated for the project, and will participate in the formation and work of the change teams. They include: the Frances Nelson Community Health Center; the C-U Public Health District; Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois; and Carle Foundation, Hospital, and Clinic.

If universal access to health education and care is to be achieved, policymakers, providers, and consumers will need to work together to overcome social and cultural barriers. "Opening Doors in Champaign County" will provide our community with an opportunity to do this, as well as the honor of sharing our trials and successes with others across the country.

CCHCC MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Enclosed is my check for: \$

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

Change of Address:

Name/Phone:	
Address:	
City/State/Zip:	
I .	

Contributions to CCHCC are tax-deductible.

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

Dental Referral Program

After a year and a half of planning, the Dental Referral Program is gearing up for implementation. The program will increase access to dental care for low-income consumers who currently cannot afford it.

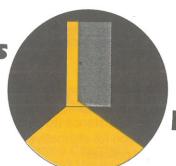
The idea for the program originated over three years ago. It was suggested by a local provider, who said if we came up with a workable plan, he would help make it a reality. Over the past 18 months, CCHCC has worked with consumers, community leaders, and providers to assess needs and develop a model which all parties could accept. We believe this has been accomplished.

The Dental Referral Program has two sections. In the primary section, low-income consumers will be matched with participating dentists to receive a preventive care visit, consisting of an exam and x-ray. The consumer will pay a reduced rate for this visit. In the secondary part of the program, the client and the participating dentist will arrange for any additional dental work which may be necessary. The fee for this additional work will be based on a reduced rate schedule.

The program will be managed by CCHCC, with a special phone line established to handle the calls. Potential clients will be screened, and those who are eligible will receive referrals to participating providers. The appointment scheduling and payments will be arranged between the client and the provider.

Currently, we are in the process of recruiting providers to join the program. Watch for an announcement regarding our official start. We look for it to be a big success. Please contact the Health Care Consumers' offices with your comments or questions.

Opening Doors



Health Care For All

At one time or another, nearly every one of us has felt it: that sinking feeling you get when the doorknob doesn't turn, or the car door won't budge.

Instinctively, you reach for your pocket or purse, but before your hand is even halfway there, you've already guessed the awful truth. You've locked yourself out.

Your initial feelings of disbelief turn quickly to abject helplessness when you realize that there, hanging in plain sight from the ignition, are the keys you need to open the door. So you stand there, looking in, until your frustration builds to the breaking point. You have to do *something!*

Now imagine that it's not just a car door, or your house. It's an entire culture, a series of societal barriers, and what's inside isn't just a convenience, it's *life or death*. It's health care.

Throughout this newsletter you'll find examples of these kinds of barriers: individual attitudes that hold people back; institutional policies that deny access to care; and authoritarian figures in politics or business who discourage input from those who are most affected by the crisis.

It's frustrating; no question about it. But for seventeen years now, the Health Care Consumers *have* been doing something about it. For seventeen years, we've organized to open the doors to health care access; to tear down the barriers to social justice; and to work with those who feel the frustration the most. And now we'd like to invite you to join us as we celebrate those members of our community who've **gotten something done**.

On Saturday, March 19, we'll be honoring deserving citizens and

CCHCC'S Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, March 19, 1994 Chancellor Inn

activists at CCHCC's Annual Awards Dinner. Among the honors we'll be distributing that evening are:

The Elsie Field Provider of the Year Award, which goes to those individuals or groups who've made a difference from within the system, providing high levels of care throughout the community;

The Harry Baker Community Service Award, for those who distinguished themselves in public service for health care;

The Outstanding Legislator Award for elected officials who've made the biggest difference in health care and government;

The Excellence in Health Care Reporting Award, for members of the press who've gone above and beyond in their efforts to keep the public informed on critical health care issues; and no less important, our Consumer Leadership Award, the Henrietta DeBoer Volunteer of the Year Award, the Mike Doyle Activist of the Year Award, and of course, the infamous Golden Bedpan.

As a special treat, this year's featured speaker will be Sara McClendon, an independent journalist who's been covering the White House beat since FDR. She's managed to keep her sense of perspective (and humor) through five decades of beltline follies. You may have heard her pronounce her passion for single-payer, Canadian-style reform last month on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. Come and hear her insider's viewpoint on the Clinton administration's prospects for reform.

Dinner will be served at 6:30 at the Chancellor Inn, but come early for the 5:30 cash bar and a chance to renew old acquaintances and form new alliances.

Together, we can tear down the barriers and open the doors, and the people and groups we'll be honoring are the living proof that the best cure for frustration is inspiration. Come share it with us.

Champaign County Health Care Consumers 44 East Main, Suite 208 Champaign, IL 61820

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