

HEALTH CARE CONSUMER

Summer

Newsletter of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers

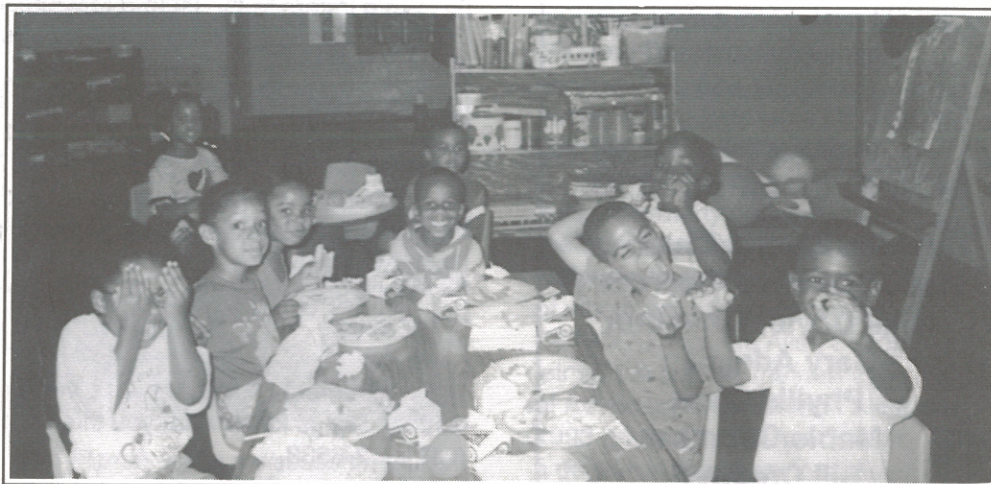
1995

Governor's Plan Hazardous to Health

The State of Illinois has a large financial problem on its hands -- a \$6 billion Medicaid debt, to be exact. The governor's proposed solution is called MediPlan Plus, and it would place some Medicaid recipients into a managed care health system. But members of CCHCC's Universal Health Care Committee don't believe this plan is in the best interest of consumers or taxpayers. "If Governor Edgar is smart, he's hoping that his request for a waiver of Medicaid regulations will be denied," said committee member Charles Segard at a recent CCHCC press conference. "If implemented, MediPlan Plus will become a lose-lose scenario for both the people of Illinois and the governor."

At the June 15 press conference, members of the committee unveiled "A Community Report on MediPlan Plus," which is their critique of the governor's plan. Committee members have an ongoing commitment to monitoring health care proposals,

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CCHCC's year-long campaign to provide Summer Food Programs at public housing complexes produced happy faces for these local children.

Summer Food Service Programs Build on Success

After a long struggle with the Housing Authority of Champaign County over the implementation of a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), CCHCC is happy to announce that the Housing Authority Board formally agreed to sponsor the SFSP and began serving hot meals to children in mid-June!

Last year, the Champaign News-Gazette printed this headline: "Housing Authority Rejects Proposal for Free Lunch Program." Needless to say, many residents of Champaign and Urbana were disappointed when the Housing Authority of Champaign County (HACC) voted down a motion to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program, in spite of a persistent and diligent campaign by CCHCC's Children's Health Committee. The HACC Board claimed that lack of space and supervision, as well as

inadequate planning time, motivated their decision to reject a plan to provide hot meals to many low-income children during the summer months.

This spring, CCHCC reapproached HACC in an effort to resolve these past problems. CCHCC staff, the Champaign Park District, and the Illinois Hunger Coalition all cooperated with HACC to devise a program that would be convenient for all of the children living in or near the housing complexes.

"The hardest part was agreeing on a program that would be accessible to children of all ages. Younger kids often have difficulty participating in a program when they have to cross busy streets in order to get to the food service sites," said Nisha Rathi, CCHCC Children's Health Coordinator.

After several meetings and study

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Health Care Consumer

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

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You Can Make a Difference!

CCHCC is committed to organizing efforts to stop any rollbacks of consumer rights or health care accessibility in either Washington or Springfield, but we need your help. Many programs, such as Medicare and AFDC, which contribute to the quality of life for millions of Americans nationwide and in Champaign County, are being attacked or slashed. We can successfully resist these efforts...all we need is your involvement. **YOU CAN:**

- * Write a letter to Rep. Thomas Ewing, as well as local representatives Stan Weaver, Tim Johnson, and Rick Winkel, expressing your support of social safety net programs.
- * Write letters to the editors of your local papers, informing your neighbors about the draconian measures being considered in the General Assembly and in Congress.
- * Become a member of CCHCC's Universal Health Care Committee.
- * Become a member of CCHCC, and volunteer your time to our efforts by calling Alisa Simon at the CCHCC offices. You can also make a financial contribution to CCHCC's efforts by calling David Clarkin at the CCHCC offices, or by clipping and mailing the membership form inside the back page of this newsletter.
- * Tell your friends about CCHCC's work, and encourage them to become involved.

We appreciate the support given to us by the communities of Champaign County. Let us know what you think of our efforts. Call Ean at the CCHCC offices at (217) 352-6533.

Thanks to all those who returned ballots for the **1995 CCHCC Board of Directors Elections**, which were distributed in the last newsletter. CCHCC would like to congratulate the following returning board members: **Gary Adelman**, professor of English at U of I, and a board member since 1991; **Bill Creswell**, chair of CCHCC's Universal Health Committee, and a board member since 1991; and **Esther Patt**, director of the Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union, city Alderperson from the 1st Ward in Urbana, and a board member since 1989.

In addition, the following seven new board members were also elected: **Judy Davis**, Teen Program Facilitator of Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois, and an advisory board member for the Opening Doors project; **Regina Galer-Uni**, former Parkland College health educator, and a founding member of CCHCC's Children's Health Committee; **Judith Jepsen-Popel**, former president of the Paxton Board of Education, and a member

of CCHCC's Universal Health Care Committee; **Dan Lentz**, former CCHCC door canvasser and U of I student, who helped organize the university's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; **Laurel Prussing**, former Champaign County Auditor, former State Representative (103rd District), and the recipient of CCHCC's 1993 Best Legislator of the Year award for her work on universal health care; **Don Robinson**, retired employee of Borden Dairy, and a member of CCHCC's Hotline Advocates Committee; and **Chuck Segard**, former board chair for WEFT-FM, and a member of CCHCC's Universal Health Care Committee.

At the June board meeting: Lilia Peters, who has been on the board for three years and was serving as acting chair, was elected Chair of the Board; board veteran Marion Gushee was elected secretary, replacing Esther Patt; and Mike Doyle, CCHCC co-founder and former CCHCC Executive Director, was re-elected treasurer.

CCHCC Briefs

Volunteers Needed for Phone-A-Thon

Are you looking for an easy way to help improve local health care, but only have a few hours to spare? Are you looking for a fun time with friends and a chance to meet new people who share your interests? CCHCC's annual Phone-A-Thon is the perfect opportunity to do all of this, and more!

This year's Phone-A-Thon is scheduled for October 9-12 and 16-19 at the CCHCC offices. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 to support our local efforts to improve health care, through our Hotline and Dental Referral programs, Rural Health Project, Universal Health Care Committee, and Opening Doors Project. Last year over 150 local residents pitched in to make the event a huge success, and we'll need all of you back and more, if we're going to meet this year's goal.

We especially need volunteers to make calls on one or more nights, to talk to local supporters and ask them to renew their memberships in CCHCC. (It may sound scary if it's new to you, but it's really easy, fun, and vital to CCHCC's work.)

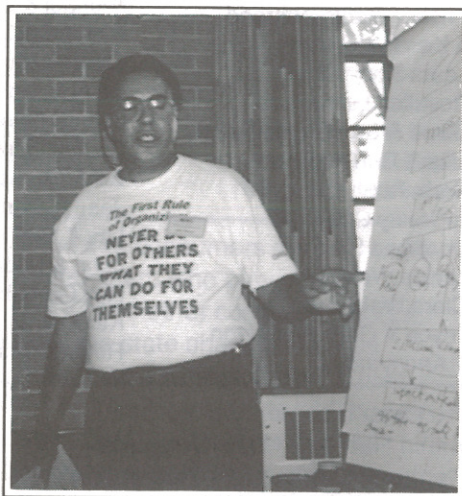
Additionally, volunteers are needed to:

- * help plan the event, decorate, and ask local retailers for donations;
- * stuff envelopes and prepare mailings;
- * provide childcare for other volunteers;
- * perform simple clerical tasks like looking up new phone numbers; and
- * send thank-you cards to donors.

Each volunteer will receive a free, limited edition CCHCC t-shirt as our way of saying thanks, and meals, drinks, and snacks also will be provided each night. In addition, prizes (like a night-out-for-two) will be awarded to volunteers each night. Planning and preparation begins early, so volunteer now -- you'll be glad you did. Questions? Call David or Alisa at 352-6533.

Board/Staff Retreat

CCHCC held its annual board and staff retreat on May 14 and 15 at the Illinois Disciples Foundation. The retreat focused on how to improve our organization's community organizing and leadership development efforts. Much of the session was led by community organizer John Flamer of the Illinois Education Association.



John Flamer leads a discussion at the 1995 CCHCC Board/Staff Retreat

Staff Changes

Several dedicated members of the CCHCC family have left the staff since the last newsletter was published, and we will be saying goodbye to a few more this fall. Ruth Michaelis and Kayo Okawa, coordinators for the Hotline and Dental Referral Program for the last two years, both left the staff in late spring. Also, our two clerical support student workers from the U of I, Shineka Ammons and

Janelle Lehmann, completed their year of service.

This fall, CCHCC will see the departure of five staff members who have been instrumental in our success over the past few years. Catherine Crandall, who worked on rural health care and universal access issues, will be leaving to relocate to Arizona. Nisha Rathi, Rural Health Care organizer, and Ponrat Pakpreo, Universal Health Care organizer, will both be leaving the staff to attend medical school. Myrtle Chatman, who has been coordinator of the Medicare 100 and Plus programs, will be leaving in August. And finally, Laura Kurre, Acting Executive Director, will also leave the staff in August.

Though we are saddened by the loss of so many dedicated staff members, we have been fortunate to welcome two new staff members, both of whom are just as committed to CCHCC's mission. Alisa Simon has joined the staff as the new coordinator of Advocacy and Referral. Alisa is a 1993 graduate of Beloit College, with a degree in Sociology and Asian Studies. Alisa recently moved to Champaign from Thailand, where she was teaching English and coordinating job training programs at a local college. Leslie Moore also has joined the staff, to work with the Opening Doors project. Leslie is a 1993 graduate of the U of I at Urbana-Champaign, with a BS in Community Health. Leslie is currently the president of the local graduate chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta sorority, and plans to attend graduate school in public health in the fall of 1996.

"Thank You"

to all our friends for your wonderful response to our first
Bakeless Bake Sale.

You always come through for our Medicare 100 and Plus programs, and we appreciate you all very much.

Special thanks to Ms. Betty McKaufsky, who wrote the poem and gave us permission to use it for the Bakeless Bake Sale.

And YOU made it a success.

Love ya all,
Myrtle and CCHCC

Thanks to Our Major Supporters

CCHCC appreciates the value of every gift we receive, no matter how large or small, and we realize that sometimes even the smallest contribution represents a great sacrifice by the giver. Unfortunately, lack of space prevents us from thanking all of the 4000+ families which offered their support to CCHCC in the past year. So, on behalf of the Board of Directors of CCHCC, I would like to thank those families and individuals whose sacrifice was essential to the continuing work of CCHCC and whose giving inspires the rest of the community to support our fight as best they can.

Thank you all.

--David

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Summer Food Services

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sessions, HACC agreed to open five sites throughout Champaign and Urbana, including the Tenant Resource Centers in the Birch Village, Dorsey, and Lakeside Terrace housing units. These sites included breakfast and a preschool daycamp program run by the Champaign Park District, followed by a lunch open to all children. The other two sites serving lunch were the Boys and Girls Club, and the King School in Urbana.

In addition to the HACC program, the Douglass Recreation Center in Champaign and the Rantoul Recreation Center on the former Chanute AFB continued their SFSPs this year. The Children's Health Committee worked closely with these agencies last spring to design the programs and apply for grants. Both recreation centers saw great success in the summer of 1994, and expected even more participation in 1995.

"We are anticipating a 20 to 30% increase in the number of children we serve this year," said Bob Nuckols, Youth Director in Rantoul, and SFSP organizer. This boost in participation may be due partly to increased publicity about the program in some of

the lower income neighborhoods within Rantoul. At the Douglass Center in Champaign, Recreation Director Walter Smith also expected participation to surpass the 200 kids per day fed at the site last year. "This program meets a vital need for many children in our community. The effects of better nutrition on these children are even visible through their increased attention spans and overall behavior."

What is the need for nutrition programs in the summer? Regina Galer-Unti, health professor at Parkland and a CCHCC member, explains that "during the summer months, children are no longer being fed at school. Many parents experience great difficulty in providing for the extra meals their children require." For each child who normally eats breakfast and lunch at school, a parent must provide twenty extra meals per week during the summer. Consequently, many children do not always eat properly during this season, even though they are especially active. The SFSP program helps to ensure that children are meeting their nutritional needs throughout the entire year. Also, the job opportunities created through the program are beneficial to Housing Authority residents. Tenants were recruited in the spring for both paid

and volunteer positions to perform supervisory, bookkeeping, and recreational activities.

Though the SFSP has served the nutritional needs of thousands of children since its creation in 1968, it is one of many entitlement programs that have been under fire in both the House of Representatives and the Senate in Washington, DC. Proposals currently on the table aim to eliminate federal nutritional programs like SFSP, and replace them with state-run programs, funded by block grants. Under these proposals, nutritional programs would no longer have the flexibility to expand, due to restricted funds. SFSP has been highlighted as one of the most endangered programs, and could face devastating cuts that would force it out of existence in a few years.

Today, hundreds of children throughout Champaign County are eating better and living healthier during their active summer months, because of SFSPs. The dedication and resourcefulness of people like Walter Smith, Bob Nuckols, and many others are true assets to their communities. It is up to those concerned about children's health to make sure that the positive impact made by these people and their programs can be sustained. Children everywhere deserve the chance to reap the benefits of enhanced nutrition.

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MediPlan Plus

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policies, and practices, and to exposing those plans that have the potential to negatively affect health care consumers. Marion Gushee, Charles Segard, and Bettina Chapman participated in the research and drafting of the report. The committee plans to disseminate copies of the report to local and state legislators, influential policy makers, and concerned citizens and local organizations. Copies of the report are available to CCHCC members and the general public for a donation of \$3.

The State of Illinois has embarked on a dangerous path that will negatively impact the health care of over one million Illinoisans. On July 26, 1994, Governor Edgar signed Public Act 88-554, which enables the state to apply for a Section 1115 waiver of the Social Security Act. Since the state would be spending federal dollars in a fashion different than federal guidelines require, the state must apply for a waiver. In order to have a waiver approved, the state must prove it can provide the same or better quality of services for the same or a lesser amount of money. If approved, this waiver allows the state to violate certain federal safeguards and protections that serve to protect the rights and health of Illinois' Medicaid recipients.

The proposed waiver program calls for fundamental changes in public policies that affect both

low-income consumers and the health care providers who serve them. CCHCC and other consumer groups across the state share numerous concerns about the governor's plan. What follows is an outline of the main points from the report, so that consumers across the county can better understand this potentially disastrous plan.

1) MediPlan Plus will not save tax dollars.

One of the main premises of MediPlan Plus is that its creation would save tax dollars. But MediPlan Plus targets the population that uses the least amount of Medicaid funds. The targeted population (low-income parents and their children) makes up about two-thirds of Medicaid recipients, but currently uses only 30% of Medicaid funds. The state is proposing to save money by targeting the smallest and slowest-growing portion of Medicaid costs. The vast majority of growth in Medicaid costs has been in the very services that are excluded from MediPlan Plus; thus, the proposed savings are unrealistic.

2) MediPlan Plus will institutionalize discrimination.

Under this plan, Medicaid recipients will be segregated from insured and self-paying patients, thereby institutionalizing a discriminatory, two-tiered health care system. The state has applied for a waiver which would remove safeguards protecting Medicaid

recipients from discriminatory policies. In particular, Medicaid providers are currently required to maintain at least 25% of their patients from the private sector, ensuring that the same levels of care are provided for all patients, regardless of the source of payment. Under this plan, however, certain Medicaid providers would be exempt from this federal requirement, allowing them to serve Medicaid recipients exclusively, and becoming, in essence, Medicaid factories, with the subsequent endangerment of their patients' rights and health.

3) MediPlan Plus will compromise quality of care.

Many CCHCC members are familiar with the State of Illinois' shady past regarding managed care programs. The state already has a history of failed experiments with managed care plans: in particular, the statewide managed care plan to provide dental care for Medicaid recipients. Delta Dental, a Chicago-based corporation, contracted with the State of Illinois to provide accessible, quality dental care for nearly 800,000 individuals. What resulted instead, was a decrease in access to needed services, reductions in the quality of care, inefficient management, reductions in provider reimbursements, built-in disincentives for providers, and an appalling lack of enforcement by the state's Department of Public Aid. The ineffectiveness of the statewide dental plan further illustrates the risks of the MediPlan Plus approach.

Judith Sattazahn
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and also...

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 R.T. Elliot Construction Co.
 Walnut Street Tea Company

CCHCC'S TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

CCHCC will be celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 1997! We are currently beginning to work on a **CCHCC Twenty Year History** book. This book will include pictures, stories, and highlights of our twenty year history. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the project, please call Ean at the CCHCC office.

Advocate's Advice

What we hear is what we Know!

*Offering consumers assistance with health-related problems is the function of the Consumer Health Hotline. The **Advocate's Advice Corner** shares common questions and their solutions.*

Access to Your Medical Records

The mystique surrounding physicians and hospitals creates an illusion of power. Often, consumers feel intimidated by their health care providers, and powerless to control their own health matters. Busting the illusion and equipping consumers to overcome inappropriate fear is an advocate's role. Consumers need to be reassured that they have a right to information in their medical files. Illinois law secures that right.

Basically, the law states that every physician and hospital is *required* to permit the patient, their physician, or an authorized attorney to examine the patient's medical records. Upon receiving a written request for copies, health care providers must respond within 60 days.

If a consumer is denied access to their medical records, they need to be reminded of their power to advocate for themselves, backed by the collective advocacy of CCHCC.

The following list explains the policies of health care providers in our community:

Carle Foundation Hospital and Carle Clinic

Patients must fill out and sign a release of records authorization form, or submit a written, signed request. 48 hours notice is required. To send medical records to other health care providers, there is no charge. To provide copies for attorneys, the fees are: \$5 for the first page, \$18 for 2-5 pages, and 65 cents for each additional page. Contact the Medical Records department at 383-3381.

Covenant Medical Center

Patients must fill out and sign an authorization form, or submit a written, signed request. 48 hours notice is required. To send medical records to other health care providers, there is no charge. Copies for personal use cost \$10 for the first ten pages, and \$1 for each additional page. Contact the Medical Records department at 337-2167.

Christie Clinic

Patients must fill out and sign an authorization form. To send medical records to other health care providers, there is no charge. Personal copies for attorneys cost \$5 for the first three pages, and \$1 for each additional page. Contact the Correspondence Department at 366-9656.

Frances Nelson Health Center

Patients must fill out and sign a release of information form. To send medical records to other health care providers, there is no charge, and these copies can be sent out the same day as requested. For personal copies, the cost is \$7.50 for the first 25 pages, and 25 cents for each additional page. Contact the Medical Records department at 356-1558.

Requirements and policies may differ under special circumstances such as HIV, drug, or alcohol related situations, and psychiatric releases.

The **CCHCC Health Hotline** accepts calls Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Staffed by trained volunteers, the **Hotline** offers consumers help with a variety of health-related situations. The **Hotline** number is 352-6533.

Board Profiles: Marion Gushee

by Lynn Crandall

If you want to know the meaning of activist, look to Marion Gushee. A woman of many talents, she feels the discontent shared by people unwilling to accept life's inequities. She has spent her life devoted to making the world a better place, for everyone.

Marion was born in Brunswick, Maine. Although life has given her the experience of living in many locals (including Illinois, France, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC), she still has a house in Maine, and lovingly calls it *home*. "I need my saltwater fix every now and then," she jokes.

Obtaining her degree from Oberlin College, she then studied in France. Back in the U.S., her studies took her to Yale. It was Yale where she met her future husband. "We were married in 1958, and I've been following him around ever since," she says. As educators, she and her husband worked for both Yale and the University of Wisconsin. Ultimately, Marion became a professor of music history at the University of Illinois.

But after nineteen years of "being overworked and underpaid," Marion moved in a different direction: custom sewing. She sews items like draperies, as well as clothing. Designing and sewing her own designs is what she finds most exciting. Her specialties include clothing for special occasion wear. Her freelance sewing business provides her with a creative outlet, and a little "stash of my own."

In between the time spent teaching, designing, and sewing, she somehow has sandwiched in: the mothering of four children; an intimate, hands-on involvement with a food co-op; and numerous roles in community service. (Whew!) Needless to say, Marion exudes action.

As a board member at CCHCC, Marion focuses her action attitude on ensuring accessible health care for all.



"I'm very fortunate to have adequate health care coverage, but I've met many people who aren't so lucky," she says. "I think the people at CCHCC are effective because they sincerely care about people." CCHCC's Universal Health Care organizer, Ponrot Pakpreo, echoes this sentiment about Marion. "She's very enthusiastic, caring, and involved. Marion is very committed to the Universal Health Care Committee."

Search the masthead of the League of Women Voters' newsletter, and you'll find Marion's name. Along with editing the newsletter, she travels to Springfield to lobby for various causes. That's when she isn't working on fundraisers, or taking classes at the U of I. While Marion professes to enjoy getting her hands dirty, planting

and nurturing a mixture of vegetables, flowers, and berries, it's hard to imagine her stuffing more activities into her days. Perhaps that's why she calls herself a "catch-up" gardener.

What brings a smile to Marion's face? Knowing that she's made a difference in people's lives. "I took mothering very seriously, so there were times when my level of activism decreased, but I always came back to it. I like advocating for important issues." Now, she sees her children following her lead. "It's very satisfying to see my children's community involvement now," she says, knowing it has rubbed off from her influence.

But there's clearly no indication she'll be leaving the activist life to her kids. Listing a sample of what she would like to accomplish, she says that "throughout Champaign County, there are a lot of people in need of basic services, like school lunch programs and well-baby clinics. We would like to see the formation of a county-wide health department."

Focusing her talents and her care for people as a member of our board, Marion clearly furthers our cause. CCHCC appreciates Marion's commitment to improving the quality of life for everyone.

Become a Health Hotline Advocate and learn to assist consumers with health care complaints, referrals, and questions!

There are training sessions coming up soon -- don't miss them!

Call Alisa at 352-6533 today for an interview.

CCHCC MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Enclosed is my check for: \$ _____

\$50 - Friends of CCHCC

\$36 - Family Membership/Adopt-A-Senior

\$25 - Individual Membership

\$15 - Seniors Citizens/Students/Fixed Income

Change of Address:

Name/Phone: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Contributions to CCHCC are tax-deductible.

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

Champaign County Citizens Take Action!

After hearing about cuts to valuable programs such as school nutrition, Medicare, and Medicaid, most people reacted with shock and depression. But soon after, concerned citizens in Champaign County were seizing the opportunity to take action and express their opinions. Through a new initiative by CCHCC, over 1000 people took the time to let Senators Simon and Moseley-Braun, as well as Rep. Ewing, know where they stood on these issues.

Tables were set up at locations across town, including: the Parkland College Health Fair; the U of I McKinley Health Fair; the U of I Quad; the YMCA during Friday Forums; the Busey/Evans dorm cafeteria; Market Place Mall's annual Senior Mayfest;

and three senior housing complexes (Washington Square, Round Barn Manor, and Florida House). Both CCHCC staff and volunteers encouraged passers-by to sign postcards to express their views to our elected officials.

The response was overwhelming. Angry consumers crowded around the tables to send over 1000 postcards to our senators, expressing their outrage and disappointment over the proposed cuts in federal nutrition programs.

At the senior housing complexes, residents knocked on their neighbors' doors, gathered their friends, and lined up in front of tables to protest cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. Seniors signed over 500 postcards to send to Rep. Ewing, who supports the cuts.



A recent meeting of CCHCC's Universal Health Care Committee, which helped to organize postcarding to Rep. Tom Ewing. From l to r: board member Charles Segard, committee volunteer Marjorie Booth, board Chair Lilia Peters, board member Mamie Smith, and CCHCC hotline coordinator Alisa Simon.

Champaign County
Health Care Consumers
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Champaign, IL 61820

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Postcarding is an excellent way for people to get involved in these and other issues. Please contact Ean at CCHCC's offices to find out how you can help. If you have an issue for the next set of postcards, would like to volunteer to staff a table, or would like to host a table at your next church meeting or organizational event, please let us know as soon as possible. CCHCC believes that action is the key ingredient for change.

Employees Pledge \$100,000 to PIFI

Results are finally in from the 1994 workplace giving campaign, and once again social justice organizations like CCHCC have reason to celebrate. Employees throughout the state of Illinois pledged nearly \$100,000 to the 27 members of the Public Interest Fund of Illinois (PIFI), the progressive alternative in workplace giving. Of the support pledged, CCHCC received over \$4,500, with more than half of that coming from U of I employees. Our thanks to everyone who made the campaign a success by spreading the word to their friends and co-workers about alternative giving and supporting CCHCC through PIFI.

Currently, PIFI has exciting plans to involve more employees in next year's campaign. A special "Friends of PIFI" packet has been developed for employees who would like to help spread the word. "Friends" will serve as an informational resource for co-workers interested in alternative giving. If you're looking for a fun, easy way to support CCHCC, would like more information on our workplace organizing efforts, or want to know how to give through your workplace, call David at (217) 352-6533.



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*"A World of
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