



# Health Care Consumer

Newsletter of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers

## Public Health Services Contract Approved *Public Pressure Forces County Board to Move Forward*

Eighteen months after voters passed the public health referendum, the County Board and the Board of Health finally approved the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's contract to provide public health services to county residents. This represents a big step forward in bringing long-awaited public health services to county

residents, and is a major victory for the Friends of Public Health and all county residents.

In a dramatic turn of events, and only after tremendous public pressure by the Friends of Public Health coalition, the County Board finally voted to approve the contract for public health services at their April 21 meeting. Over 60 public health supporters were present at this meeting of the County Board, including League of

Women Voters representatives and many county residents who the C-U Public Health District. This contract requires that the County Board pass all the necessary ordinances for food, water, and sewage inspections and licensing. Until the County Board passes these ordinances, no public health services can begin. Although this contract had been approved by the Board of Health and the C-U Public Health District

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Arthur J. Skelton of Schucks in Champaign receives award from CCHCC Staff, Linda Turnbull. Other awards p. 4

## CCHCC's 21st Annual Awards Dinner: *A Fine Celebration*

The Chancellor Hotel in Champaign was the place to be for consumer activists on the night of March 14. More than 200 CCHCC members, supporters, volunteers, and friends dressed in their finest and gathered together for the 21st Annual Awards Dinner—a festive community celebration of our collective efforts to bring quality, affordable health care to all residents of East Central Illinois.

The themes this year was "Our Health, Our Voice, Our Choice." Award recipients (see list on p. 4) represented several

of the wide diversity of groups and topics included in the CCHCC community and covered under the enormous human issue of "health care." Consistent through all recipients, however, was a commitment to shaping the health care system into one that is both accessible to con-

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## Health Care Consumer

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organization dedicated to ensuring accessible,

affordable health care for all.

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**Belinda Summers**

**Linda Turnbull**

**Kendrick Vaughn**

### Contributors

**Bill Mueller**

**Constance Fitzgerald**

## Federal Trade Commission Investigates Carle Clinic Billing

### *CCHCC Consumer Group Filed Complaint*

On January 21, 1998, CCHCC's Medical Billing Task Force (MBTF), on behalf of the entire East Central Illinois community, filed formal charges against Carle with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). After nearly a year of trying to meet with Carle representatives quietly to address the harmful practices of the Clinic's Patient Accounts department, the MBTF grew frustrated since these efforts to cooperate with Carle were not working.

The MBTF provided documentation on three specific practices of the Clinic: (1) Delays in crediting payments and failure to properly credit payment. (2) Inappropriate interest charges on bills pre-dating 1997 and failure to provide meaningful disclosure of credit terms; and (3) Failure to honor and provide meaningful disclosure of grace period and billing cycle.

The FTC's investigations are not public, meaning that they will



*Dr. Quentin Young, President of the American Public Health Association and founder of Health and Medicine Policy Research Group and Physicians for a National Health Program, met with Mary Barker and other Medical Billing Task Force Members in March.*

not be issuing press releases on the status of the Carle case. MBTF members are checking into how best to get that information. In the meantime, there is evidence that the MBTF campaign is producing more results. Most recently, Carle Patient Accounts manager, Marsha Creek called CCHCC to request a weekly phone conversation to keep up with the flow of consumer complaints. There are also reports from Carle employees that Patient Account employees are being forced to come to work an hour earlier each day in order to check for mistakes and that the Clinic is scrambling behind the scenes as a result of heightened publicity. MBTF members do not really expect a dramatic public apology and a promise to reform from Carle officials. Bit by bit,



## Help Paying for Prescription Drugs for the Elderly & Poor

by Constance Fitzgerald

One of the most significant health concerns facing poor Americans today is affordability and access to prescription drugs. This problem impacts the older American population the most. This must not overshadow that affordability of prescription drugs is an important issue for all poor people. According to an Information Paper prepared by the staff of the Special Committee on Aging, U.S. Senate in September 1992, "taking prescription medications is a matter of life and death for many older Americans. Yet, the sad truth is that many older Americans are having to make the unfortunate choice between buying food and paying for their drugs."

Unknown to most Americans, assistance is available for poor people to obtain prescription drugs. In the early 1990s, the U.S. Senate's Special Committee on Aging and primarily the companies comprising the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) created 'patient assistance' or 'indigent patient' programs. These programs provide free medications from drug manufacturers for eligible patients identified by their physicians for these benefits. Occasionally medical patient advocates and social workers can access them as well. Patients cannot directly access these programs.

How do these patient assistance or indigent patient programs work? No uniform income guidelines apply to all

existing programs. Therefore, each drug manufacturer has its own eligibility criteria, application or request process, and method of providing medicines. To be eligible for these programs, you cannot be a Medicaid recipient, must be low-income, and cannot be covered already by a program that provides prescription assistance. Upon approval of a physician's request for a patient, the drug manufacturer usually provides 2-3 months of medications. Doctors can reapply as long as the patient continues to meet the program's guidelines. However, not all drugs are covered by these programs and with some companies, available drugs change depending on demand and other factors. Most programs have an application process but some offer enrollment by telephone. Still others offer a kind of pharmacy charge card to be used to obtain free medicines.

Information about these programs is scarce. The S.H.I.P. (Senior Health Insurance Program) of the IL Dept. of Insurance offers the PhRMA 'Directory of Prescription Assistance Programs' and a 'Prescription Drug Information Guide' to the public. Call S.H.I.P. at 1-800-548-9034 for a copy. Information about prescription assistance programs and application forms are available through the CCHCC Consumer Health Hotline at 352-6533. If you feel you may qualify for a patient assistance program, ask your 'prescribing' physician to access these programs for you.

### Prescription Drug Alert

**Zoloft, 100 mg per tablet, 50 tablets**

**CARLE RX EXPRESS - \$108.32**

602 W University Ave, Urbana, 383-3250

**CHRISTIE CLINIC PHARMACY - \$116.03**

1801 W Windsor Rd, Champaign, 366-1278

**COVENANT PHARMACY - \$117.64**

1400 W Park St., Urbana, 337-4545

VIP discount only

**DOCTORS BLDG PHARMACY - \$105.50**

301 E Springfield Ave., Champaign, 356-1819

**JERRY'S IGA PHARMACY - \$94.49**

2010 S Philo Rd Urbana, 367-4390

with Medicare 100/+ discount - free delivery

**KMART SUPER CENTERS - \$111.69**

800 W Bloomington Rd., Champaign, 356-2839

**THE MEDICINE SHOPPE - \$98.71**

1607 S Prospect Ave., Champaign, 352-7070

with Medicare 100/Plus discount - free delivery

**MEIJERS PHARMACY - \$103.49**

2401 N Prospect Ave., Champaign, 353-4000

**OSCO DRUG PHARMACY - \$107.69**

Champaign Market Place Mall, 352-4272

**REVCO PHARMACY - \$105.29**

Eastwood Shopping Center Mahomet, 586-4914

60 or over 10% discount

**ST. JOSEPH APOTHECARY - \$127.86**

218 Lincoln St. Joseph, 469-2232

**SCHNUCKS SUPERMARKETS - \$103.67**

109 N Mattis Ave., Champaign, 351-8497

200 N. Vine St., Urbana, 337-6551

with Medicare 100/Plus discount

**TARGET STORES - \$102.39**

2102 N Prospect Ave., Champaign, 355-3345

**WAL-MART DISCOUNT CITIES - \$117.72**

913 W Marketview Dr., Champaign, 352-1490

pledges to beat other pharmacy prices

**WALGREEN DRUG STORES - \$106.59**

1813 W Kirby Champaign, 356-0521

It is important to develop a relationship with a pharmacist. It may be dangerous to pick up different prescription drugs at different places. Always make sure your doctors and pharmacist know all the drugs you are taking to protect you from dangerous interactions and side effects. Call these pharmacies to find out prices for your medicines. If you have questions call your pharmacist or CCHCC. Priced May 4, 1998.



# 1998 Awards Recipients

Lifetime Achievement Award  
**Dr. Quentin Young**

Elsie Field Provider of the Year  
**Dr. Scott F. Anderson**  
**Dr. Charles H. Keener**  
**Dr. John W. Ritter**  
**Dr. Norman L. Schutt**  
**Dr. Valerie Woodruff**  
members of the Dental Referral Program

Harry J. Baker  
Community Service Award  
**Jerry's IGA Pharmacy on Philo**  
**Schnuck's Pharmacy,**  
**Champaign**  
**Schnuck's Pharmacy, Urbana**  
members of the  
Medicare 100 and Plus Programs

Excellence in  
Health Care Reporting  
**Cheryl Uitti**

Henrietta DeBoer  
Volunteer of the Year  
**Ramona Alvadj**

Aimee Olson  
Advocate of the Year  
**Junetta Gillespie**



*Dr. Charles H. Keener is awarded Provider of the Year by CCHCC Board Member Esther Patt.*



*Ramona Alvadj, CCHCC 1998 Volunteer of the Year (center) sits with Ruth Baker and Eric Gerdt before the dinner and ceremony.*

## CCHCC Dinner Celebration Continued from page 1

sumers and responsive to their needs and priorities.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Quentin Young. A practicing physician at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago, Dr. Young is president of the American Public Health Association, National Coordinator of Physicians for a National Health Care Program, and Chairman of the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group. Long a proponent of grassroots activism in health care, Dr. Young delivered an entertaining and informative address that covered such topics as public health, the history of U.S. health care policy, and the ill effects of "big business in medicine." He stressed the importance of local organizing, and held up CCHCC as a model for other communities.

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our hotline on exactly this issue, "That's why I was so surprised to hear that our local State Representative is sponsoring a bill that doesn't include language to hold companies accountable," said Greenwalt.

"That's the industry bill, the one the managed care companies wrote to confuse the issue in Springfield," said William McNary, Legislative Director for Citizen Action. House Bill 3445, Sponsored by local representative Rick Winkel, undercuts strong consumer protections in the Managed Care Reform Act by proposing a set of weaker quality assurance standards for managed care companies and no financial

accountability for the company decisions.

These bills will be discussed this Spring. The consumer house bill has passed in the past, but been stuck in the Senate Rules Committee. Local State Senator Weaver chairs this committee and could be the swing vote on this and other important consumer bills that never make it the senate floor. If Managed Care Reform doesn't pass this year, it is likely to come up again next session or at the federal level.

"The only real solution to this and other problems with our health care system is single-payer, universal health care," concluded Greenwalt. "Anything less is just a Band-Aid."



# CCHCC's 1998 Awards Dinner

*Thanks To All Who Made It Possible*

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## Dinner Ticket Contributors

Mark Aber  
Gary Adelman  
Romana Alvardj  
Jan Anderson  
Robin Arbiter  
John Axtell  
Joah Barclay  
Dr. James Black  
Kathleen Bucher  
Nada Cagle  
Kevin & Melinda Cain  
Kathleen Cheney  
Athan Chilton  
Patrick Cleary  
Mary Corlin  
John & Jo Duchene  
Charles Evens  
Linda Farrand  
Constance Fitzgerald  
Georgia Franzin  
Elizabeth Galli  
Christina Gee  
Kyle & Linda Gerlach  
Jeanne Gerriettes  
Karen Greenwalt

Jim & Deloris Holiman  
Brad Hulick  
Virginia Ann Husting  
James Hutchinson  
Sharon Irish  
Tina Johnson  
Carolyn & John Kearns  
Jan Keller  
Mary & Louis Lariviere  
David Lawrance  
Linda Lindsay  
Ann Lowry  
J.P. Mayo  
Marilyn McCreery  
Lydia McKiernan  
Robert & Betty Mueller  
William Mueller  
Arthur Nikelly  
Patrick Oray  
Margaret Patten  
James & Jean Payne

Rondald & Lilia Peters  
Marjorie Probasco  
Julian Rappaport  
Carole Rebeiz  
Phyllis Robeson  
Nancy & Kim Rotzoll  
Mary Lee Sargent  
Sari Schnitzlein  
Debbie Sheldon  
Barb Shenk & Dannie Otto  
Pravesh Shrestha  
Elizabeth Slifer  
Carole Stephenson  
Cheryl Sullivan  
Jeanie Taylor  
Janice & Curtis Wilson  
Mary Fern Wolfe  
Marjorie Workman

... as much as we try to make these lists accurate, we may miss including your name. If you want to confirm that we have recorded your contribution accurately don't hesitate to call.

## Adbook Participants

AFSCME Local 3700-University of Illinois  
Bank Illinois  
Bank One  
Busey Bank  
Champaign County Democrats  
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District  
Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union  
The Chancellor Hotel & Convention Ctr  
Coalition for Consumer Rights  
Common Ground Food Co-op  
East Central Communications  
East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging  
First Mutual Bank  
Frances Nelson Health Center  
Illinois Center for Citizen Involvement—HomeBuild  
Illinois Disciples Foundation  
Illinois Education Association  
Illinois Pro Bono Center  
Illinois Trail Lawyers Association  
Jackson-Hewitt  
Jerry's IGA  
Kankakee Federal  
Kwik Kopy Printing  
Li'L Porgy's Bar-B-Q  
National Organization for Women  
The Octopus  
Of the People  
Okazaki Restorative Massage- Chuck Segard  
The Pavilion  
Periscope Records  
Prairie Center Health Systems, Inc.  
Provena Covenant  
Public Interest Fund of Illinois  
Regards Office Products  
Sweet Betsy's  
Union of Professional Employees  
University YMCA  
Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program  
Whitacre's Country Oak Shoppe  
Frank Wrestler, MD  
Yoga Institute of Champaign-Urbana  
YWCA



Bryan Holloway, Craig Matarrese, Tucker Robison, and Paul Freedman of the Municipal Jazz Works provided music for the event.



## County Public Health Department News, continued from cover.

by December of last year, County Board Chairman, Bud Barker, refused to sign the contract. Mr. Barker then convinced the Board of Health to sign a second contract which excluded mention of the County Board. This contract was known to be unacceptable to the C-U PHD. "The creation and signing of this second contract only served to cause further inexcusable delays and was a show of bad faith by both the County Board and the Board of Health," stated Friends of Public Health member Liz Mazur. The original contract, which had an effective date of April 1, was allowed to expire due to these delays and inaction.

"In addition to the delays in signing the contract for services, members of the County Board have acted with hostility to county residents," stated Jan Thom, recalling Mr. Steve Moser's proposal to ask the County Board to repeal the County Health Department. Mr. Moser's motion was ruled out of

order and he was forced to withdraw it. Until March 1998, Mr. Moser had been the County Board's representative to the Board of Health for ten months. He said that in the time he served on the Board of Health he did not "recall one individual outside of Champaign-Urbana coming and asking for services."

Ms. Thom, who is a resident in Mr. Moser's district, and has regularly attended Board of Health meetings stated that "apparently Mr. Moser did not notice that people like me, and other county residents, have sat in the same room with him during many of the County Board of Health meetings."

Now that the contract for public health services has been approved by all three parties, the next step is for the County Board to pass the necessary ordinances. The County Board should pass these without delay and difficulty, but public health supporters should remain

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## Health Action Network Rolls Into 1998

The Health Action Network (HAN) sent out its first Action Alert of the New Year at the end of January. Inspired by the case of a local woman whose HMO temporarily denied a life-saving treatment for breast cancer, the Alert asked community members to write their state senator on behalf of HB 626, the Managed Care Reform Act. The bill includes a Patient's Bill of Rights—including patient privacy, as well as provisions giving more weight to doctors' (not MBAs') opinions of what is "medically necessary." The Illinois Department of Public Health would be empowered to enforce the law and punish offenders.

The second Alert of 1998 went out in early March. HAN and CCHCC joined the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC) in opposing a rule change, proposed by the Illinois Department of Public Health's director, Dr. John R. Lumpkin, that would require local public health departments to report the names of HIV-positive Illinois residents. Called "mandatory name reporting," the policy—while well-intentioned, could backfire, resulting in fewer high-risk people getting needed testing and treatment, as well as increasing fear and discrimination in our communities. The AFC is seeking petition signatures to present to Dr. Lumpkin, and HAN has made a solid contribution to the effort.

Both of these campaigns will be continuing. For a copy of the Alerts, for further information on either or both campaigns, or for further information on the Health Action Network in general, call 352-6533.





## Mini Phon-a-thon Seeks to help Seniors

This past February, 1998 volunteers and staff from Champaign County Health Care Consumers raised money to help seniors. The program, appropriately named Support-A-Senior, was aimed supporting the Senior Task Force and at underwriting the cost of low income senior citizens and differently-abled non-seniors so they may be able to join the Medicare 100 and Medicare Plus Programs. Joyce Correa, Melissa Custodio, Katherine Daniel, Torri Davis, Cynara Edmond, Susan Haas, Therese Heenan, Ed Kim, Dan Mills, Liz Podczewinski, and Lenita Riley, helped us raise over \$3,300. Thank you!

## Public Health

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watchful and active in demanding that the County Board follow through on its responsibilities. "Over the past year and a half we've learned that the County Board cannot be trusted to fulfill its duties to county residents and the County Health Department unless we stay on them and keep pressuring them to move forward. We have to stay active and involved every step of the way," said Elizabeth Scholebo, coalition member and resident of Sadorous.

## How to remember Champaign County Health Care Consumers in your will

*I give, devise and bequeath to Champaign County Health Care Consumers of Champaign, Illinois, a charitable non-profit organization, the sum of \_\_\_\_ dollars or \_\_\_\_ percent of my estate to be used to carry out the mission of Champaign County Health Care Consumers.*



*Liz Podczewinski calls members of Health Care Consumers to tell them about the Senior Task Force and Medicare 100 and Plus Programs for the Mini Phone-a-thon.*

Thank you to those who performed at the  
benefit concert for CCHCC on April 26th

Jack Brighton & Gavin Stolte  
Lisa Boucher  
one less Karen (Robin Drew & Jim Layton)  
Keith & Kathy Harden  
Lou DiBello & Jim Bean

and to  
The Guitar Store for the sound system  
City of New Orleans, Ltd. for the venue

## CCHCC Membership Renewal Form

☐ \$120 - Patron ☐ \$60 - Sponsor ☐ \$ - Family  
☐ \$25 - Individual ☐ \$20 Low-income/Senior ☐ \_\_\_\_ Other

Change of Address/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions to CCHCC are tax-deductible.  
Please return to: CCHCC, 44 Main, Suite, 208, Champaign, IL 61820



## Legislation Looks To Protect Consumers

*Managed Care Plans to be held liable for their treatment decisions.*

In Springfield, legislators are considering two bills. House Bill 3265 is written to establish the basic safeguards that managed care consumers have been calling for.

HB3265 is called the Managed Care Reform Act and sponsored by Reps. Flowers and Krause and

—creates a uniform grievance and appeals procedure with due-process protections and the right to independent adjudication for consumers and providers;

—provides for quality of care oversight by the Department of Public Health for all plans and established consumer rights to information, choice of providers and access to emer-

gency care for all consumers; —assures that health care providers are protected from sanctions when they advocate for the consumer's health rather than just the company's

*That's the industry bill, the one the managed care companies wrote to confuse the issue in Springfield.*

*-William McNary,  
about HB3445,  
sponsored by Rick Winkel*

bottom line; and

—holds HMO's and other managed care companies accountable for treatment and medical decisions which cause harm to an insured or enrollees.

"This is similar to what the President has been talking about recently," said Nancy Greenwalt, Executive Director of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers. "Consumers have been having so many problems with managed care plans that protections need to be implemented. Holding these companies liable for their treatment decisions is important.

"A doctor and patient can agree on a treatment, but the managed care plan deny it. If the person is injured or died because of the plan's decision, right now the plan cannot be held liable. This is practically an incentive to deny any expensive treatment. We've had a number of calls to

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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URBANA, IL 61801

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