



Health Care Consumer

The Newsletter of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers

CCHCC Celebrates 30 years!



CCHCC members enjoying the 2007 Annual Dinner.

The Champaign County Health Care Consumers Annual Awards Dinner took place on April 20, 2007. This year's Dinner took on special significance as we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of CCHCC! Founded in 1977 as a vehicle to empower consumers concerned about the health care system, CCHCC has grown from a handful of local residents into the largest, most effective grassroots consumer health advocacy organization in the nation.

Nearly 200 CCHCC supporters joined us in celebration at the Annual Awards Dinner. Everyone enjoyed the 30 year retrospective slideshow, and CCHCC hopes to make it available to members soon. Thanks to everyone who has participated over the years, and here's to 30 more years!

Take action to fight local "Sicko" health care — by Sumant Tumuluru

This article is a letter-to-the-editor that was printed in the News-Gazette on July 14, 2007.

Michael Moore's recently released documentary "Sicko" details the many problems plaguing our health care system. We, both as the consumers of a troubled system and as the citizens of a country founded upon the principle of democracy, must use this moment to fight back against the purveyors of unjust health care practices. We have ignored the insurance companies and health care providers and their infinite greed far too long and have become complacent. These companies have used our collective complacency against us to fatten their wallets at the expense of our lives. These problems are not limited to big cities and other urban locations; they are in fact right here. Countless people have suffered at the hands of the duopoly run by Carle and Christie clinics in Champaign-Urbana. The similarities between these clinics and the ones highlighted in Moore's documentary are shocking- right down to the shameful practices of denying patients needed health care. Health care should not be a privilege available to only those who can afford it; it should be a right available to all. As the documentary clearly illustrates, the decision to exclude many from receiving proper health care is being made by a powerful few. It is up to us to stand up and bring about a change because the greedy insurance companies and health care providers will fight to maintain the status quo, to maximize their profits. Ask yourself this: are you willing to stand by as our clinics profit and patients pay the price with their lives?

To learn more about the issue of access to health care, read the Health Action Network in this newsletter on pages 4 and 5.

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is published by the Champaign County Health Care Consumers, a grassroots, non-profit organization working for quality, affordable health care for all.

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Changes in CCHCC Staff – by Megan McClaire

CCHCC staff will be changing this summer. Katie Coombes has served as the Medicare 100/Plus Program Coordinator and lead organizer for the Medicare Task Force since April of 2005. She will be leaving Champaign to move to Chicago where her husband will be attending law school in early August. Katie is sad to leave the community, but will continue to work for social justice issues as an organizer. "I have accepted the position of Organizing Director for Citizen Action/Illinois which is exciting because I will continue to work on Medicare Part D and will see a lot of my CCHCC friends at the Annual Convention," Katie said. She continued, "Working with CCHCC members has been the most fun and inspiring experience of my life. I won't be a stranger!"

While CCHCC staff, members, and Board are sad to see Katie leave, we are all excited to have Anne Gargano join staff full time as Katie's replacement. Anne has worked as a part-time Federal Work Study and intern at CCHCC this past year on a wide range of organizing, fundraising, and program tasks. She recently graduated from the University of Illinois and is excited about the new Health Care Access Task Force and working with the Medicare Task Force. She said, "When I heard about the opening I couldn't wait to apply and have the chance to work with such a great, dedicated, and award winning group of people."

"CCHCC staff are essential for working with our members and volunteers, who are the key to CCHCC's successes," Claudia Lennhoff, CCHCC's Executive Director said. She further stated, "I am confident that the members Katie has worked with will continue to work for a real Medicare prescription drug benefit and support Anne in this transition." We thank Katie for her excellent work and dedication, and we wish her well in her new position with Citizen Action/Illinois, and we enthusiastically welcome Anne, who we know will be a great organizer and program coordinator!



Anne - L
Katie - R



Champaign County Health Care Consumers is a proud member of Community Shares of Illinois.



Q: What is CareCredit? Should I use CareCredit to pay my medical bills?

A: CareCredit is a credit card that Christie Clinic has dressed up as a payment plan, without warning their clients about the severe penalties they could face. After the promotional period, if the balance has not been paid in full, CareCredit applies an APR of 29% retroactively, using the initial balance! Christie Clinic has started coercing clients into using CareCredit to pay off their bills in order to see a doctor. Before you consider signing up for CareCredit, be sure to read all the fine print and do not count on Christie Clinic staff to provide you with all the information you need to know about CareCredit. If Christie Clinic really cared about their patients, instead of selling them high interest credit cards, they would offer reasonable payment plans and then honor those agreements! Beware of CareCredit!

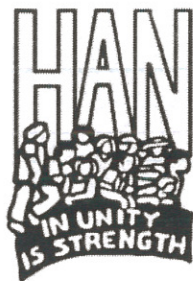
For more information, call the CCHCC Consumer Health Hotline at (217) 352-6533.

CCHCC thanks the following local businesses and organizations for their support in CCHCC's Adbook Program for our 30th Annual Awards Dinner, held on Friday, April 20, 2007.

Adapt-A-Lap Inc.	Ippatsu Salon
AFL-CIO of Champaign County	Jeffrey D. Frerichs, D.D.S.
AFSCME Council	Kevin Elliot Counseling
Anti-War Anti Racism Effort (A.W.A.R.E.)	Martin, Hood, Friese & Associates, LLC
Asian Therapeutic Bodywork	Michael L. Antoline, Attorney at Law
Bangs Salon – Susan Olson	National City Bank
Birch Tree Counseling and Consulting, LLC	PACE, Inc.
Busey Bank	Provena Covenant Medical Center
Carle Foundation Hospital	Radio Maria
Central Illinois Dental Education and Services (CIDES)	Rogards Office Plus
Central Illinois Jobs with Justice	Shouting Ground Technologies, Inc.
Centrue Bank	State Farm Insurance Bank
Champaign County Christian Health Center	Strawberry Fields
Champaign County National Organization for Women	The Access Project
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District	The Campaign for Real Choice in Illinois
Champaign-Urbana Tenant Union	The Eye Center
Community Shares of Illinois	The Great Impasta
Country Arbors Nursery, Inc.	The Latino Partnership of Champaign County
Do Good Consulting	The Lincoln Building
Esquire Lounge	The Mueller Kids
Fasprint	The Pavilion
F.A. Wrestler, M.D., Ltd.	Tomahnous Farm
First Federal Savings Bank of Champaign-Urbana	UIUC Faculty Association
Graduate Employees' Organization	UIUC Office of Women's Programs
Great Harvest Bread Company	Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence	Weiskamp Screen Printing
Illinois Disciples Foundation	

CCHCC also thanks the following individuals and organizations for helping to make the Annual Awards Dinner a success!

Jeff Machota – Adbook	Ron Keller – Award Certificates
Jeff Helgesen – Musician	Chip McNeill – Musician
Ed Schaller – Musician	Rick Orr Florist – Flower Centerpiece
Provena Covenant Medical Center – Table Donation	
Carle Foundation Hospital – Table Donation	
Illinois Disciples Foundation – Co-sponsorship	



CCHCC Health

The CCHCC Health Action Network (HAN) is a grassroots organizing effort dedicated to empowering and mobilizing consumers for system change through simple coordinated actions. Through the CCHCC HAN, individuals can help influence local, state, and national health care policy by taking action as part of a collective effort. In unity is strength! The HAN action alerts inform activists about an issue and provide information about easy ways to take action. Actions range from making a phone call or writing an email to attending meetings and forums.

To join the CCHCC HAN, and to take action on the current HAN alert, just complete the application form below. You will be added to the HAN email and mailing list.

Health Action Network

Please return this completed form to: CCHCC, 44 East Main, Suite 208, Champaign, IL 61820

☒ **YES!** I want to join the Health Action Network!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

July 2007 Health Action Network

☒ **YES! I want to take action on the Health Care Access crisis!**

I will participate in the following ways (check all that apply):

☐ **Petition!**

Add my name to the petition to demand equal access to health care for everyone in our community!

☐ **Task Force!**

I want to join the Health Care Access Task Force mailing list and receive important updates about the campaign.

☐ **Share my story!**

I have been denied medical appointments or other vital health services and I want to share my story.

Action Network

Information on the Issue

Local consumers' reports and CCHCC's research have both revealed a staggering health care crisis in Champaign County. This crisis is affecting thousands of people who have Medicaid insurance, people who are without insurance, and consumers who have medical debt. These consumers are regularly denied access to health care services at the two main local clinics, Carle Clinic and Christie Clinic. Because the majority of Champaign County's physicians (over 90%) are concentrated at the Clinics, the Clinics' policies of refusing or limiting care to patients who have Medicaid insurance, no insurance, or who have medical debt has resulted in tens of thousands of community members being locked out of primary and specialty health care services. Because of the Clinics' policies, approximately 70,000 people, or 40% of Champaign County's population, have limited or no access to vital health care services. This is a community health crisis!

The entire community, including health care providers, elected officials, state officials, local organizations, and community members all must work together to put an end to this crisis and create a lasting solution that results in quality, affordable health care for all Champaign County residents. CCHCC has begun a grassroots organizing campaign to end this health care access crisis, and we need your help! **Please take action today!**

How to Take Action!

There are several ways that you can take action to end the health care access crisis. Read below for more information on how you can help, then fill out the July 2007 Health Action Network form on the previous page and return it to CCHCC.

Add your name to our petition!

You can add your name to the petition to demand equal access to health care for everyone in our community! CCHCC has gathered hundreds of petitions already and each name added helps.

Join the Health Care Access Task Force!

We will add you to the Health Care Access Task Force mailing list and you will receive important updates about the campaign, and invitations to attend Task Force meetings and events.

Share your story!

If you have been denied medical appointments or other vital health services and want to share your story, please let us know. Local stories are important to our community organizing efforts and bring validity to our struggle. CCHCC will contact you to follow-up.

Volunteer Profile Article - Eleanor Clifton

by Katie Coombes and Claudia Lennhoff

Eleanor Clifton has been volunteering with CCHCC for more than a decade. She became involved with CCHCC during the campaign to create a county-wide public health department. In 1995, Eleanor became an active member of the Friends of Public Health Coalition, which was the county-wide coalition dedicated to creating a countywide public health department through voter referendum.



After the referendum passed, Claudia said, "Many volunteers and activists fell away, but Eleanor continued her involvement, and as I recall, became even more active!" Even as Eleanor continued to volunteer her time with the Friends of Public Health, she also got involved in other CCHCC activities, including attending community meetings on various topics, and participating in both the Medicare Task Force and the newly created Health Care Access Task Force. Ever active, Eleanor shared her current goals; "I hope that more people are willing to serve on the County Board of Health which can be extremely important in increasing access to health care for residents in our community."

Eleanor said, "Working with CCHCC through the years, we've had our ups and downs, but when we can celebrate a victory after months and sometimes years of effort there is a grand sense of accomplishment. I encourage people to get involved with CCHCC to work for increasing health care access in our community."

Eleanor is a dedicated health care activist who can always be counted on for her help and involvement, and she is always a pleasure to work with. Eleanor is understated in her demeanor, but everyone who knows Eleanor knows she is kind, dedicated, intelligent, compassionate, gracious, and always brightens any room she is in and she always makes others feel good for being there! All of us at CCHCC are fortunate to know and work with Eleanor, and to consider her a friend.

Update: Campaign for Access to Emergency Contraception – by Allison Jones

CCHCC's community organizing on women's health issues has continued with the Campaign for Access to Emergency Contraception. Since it began in 2004, the Campaign for Access to Emergency Contraception has advocated for greater access to emergency contraception at the local, state, and federal levels.

Emergency contraception (EC) is a safe and effective form of back-up birth control that can prevent pregnancy when taken up to 120 hours, or 5 days, after unprotected sex, contraceptive failure, or sexual assault. EC can only prevent a pregnancy and will not cause an abortion. Because EC is more effective the sooner it is taken, timely access to the drug is essential.

In the fall of 2006, the US Food and Drug Administration approved Plan B, the brand name of EC, for sale over-the-counter for women 18 years of age and older. Women's health activists had been advocating for over-the-counter EC for women of all ages for years, and this victory, although partial, was very important. Women who are 18 years of age can now access EC directly from a pharmacy without a prescription from a physician. Although EC is over-the-counter for this age group, women can only access EC from a pharmacist and must show proof of age in order to purchase it over-the-counter. The price of over-the-counter EC at the pharmacy is usually around \$35 to \$45. Women who are 17 years of age and younger are still required to get a prescription for EC from a physician and then get the prescription filled at a pharmacy. Many groups, including the Campaign for Access to Emergency Contraception, are continuing to advocate for over-the-counter access for EC for women of all ages. To learn more or to get involved, please contact Allison at (217) 352-6533 or email allison@healthcareconsumers.org.



Medicare Task Force members at their monthly meeting.

Medicare Beneficiaries Demand a REAL Drug Benefit! – by Katie Coombes

Since 2005, the CCHCC Medicare Task Force has been working to fix the Medicare Part D prescription drug program. Dorothy Greene, a Part D enrollee, recalls, "From the beginning we knew Part D wasn't designed to help people get affordable drugs. We all had to spend hours researching different insurance plans to buy even though we all already had Medicare."

JoEllen Sussen, a Medicare Task Force volunteer, agreed "Part D is confusing. There are dozens of different plans and things change all the time. The insurance companies make mistakes and send letters that don't make any sense."

Shirbie Faulkner, also a Medicare Task Force member, continued, "We're willing to pay a reasonable price for our medications, but Part D is just unreasonable. The prices are too high because everyone is divided up instead of having all Medicare beneficiaries on a Medicare administered plan that negotiates discounts on behalf of everyone."

The CCHCC Medicare Task Force supports reforming Part D so that it is administered by Medicare with negotiated drug prices, and without the Doughnut Hole coverage gap. "The dedicated members of this group have an active petition campaign, have held large community education meetings, released a candidate survey and more. They were a natural choice to receive the 2007 Mike Doyle Activist of the Year Award and we look forward to their ongoing efforts to fix Part D," said CCHCC Board member, Grant Antoline.

The Task Force meets the third Thursday of each month at 10:30 am at the Illinois Disciples Foundation. New members are always welcome!

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CCHCC Membership Form

Please return this completed form and your check, made payable to "CCHCC," to: 44 East Main St., Suite 208, Champaign, IL 61820

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

***And remember,
your contribution
is tax-deductible!***

☒ **Yes!** I want to make a contribution to support Champaign County Health Care Consumers.

☐ Champion (\$250)

☐ Family Membership (\$50)

☐ Advocate (\$100)

☐ General Membership (\$30)

☐ Other: \$ _____

☐ Sliding Scale Membership (\$5 - \$20)

☐ **Yes!** I want to get involved with CCHCC. Please contact me with more information on how to volunteer.

Support CCHCC through IGA's Charitable Rebate Program!

Champaign County Health Care Consumers wants to remind you of a free and easy way to support CCHCC's work! When you sign up for **IGA's HVC Charitable Rebate Program** and register your card to CCHCC, IGA will donate 1% (one penny on the dollar) of every purchase you make to our organization at **no additional cost to you!**

To enroll in the HVC program or to register your existing card to CCHCC, please follow these simple steps:

1) Get an HVC Card.

In order to participate, you need to have an HVC discount card from IGA. You can sign up for the HVC card at any IGA store. If you already have an HVC card, you do not need to get a new one.

2) Register your HVC Card.

You need to fill out a simple form and register your HVC card to CCHCC. You can get this form from any participating IGA or from CCHCC. CCHCC's organization number is 055183. Call us at (217) 352-6533 and we can send you the form, or visit our website at <http://www.healthcareconsumers.org/iga/iga.html> to download the form. Once the form is complete, return it to CCHCC and we will turn it in for you. You will need to re-register your HVC card to CCHCC once per year in June. Call us if you have any questions.

3) Shop at IGA.

Once your HVC card is registered to CCHCC, IGA will donate 1% of your total purchases to us! You don't have to do anything else, and every little bit helps us continue our work of health care for all.

Thank you for your support and call CCHCC at (217) 352-6533 with any questions!



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