

Health Care 2000

TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO ACHIEVE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL IN WASHINGTON 11/30/2001

Grassroots overcome corporate money

CUHC News Release

Members of the Campaign for Universal Health Care celebrated a tremendous grassroots victory over Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield in a municipal referendum campaign. Unofficial results gave the yes side 6,979 votes, nearly 52%, and the no side 6,447.

“...The citizens overcame corporate intimidation as Portland voters saw through Anthem’s dis-

tortions and rejected their scare campaign. We think state legislators will do the same,” declared campaign co-manager Tammy Groaton. Groaton estimated her side spent about \$25,000 to win.

The referendum, initiated by the Southern Maine Labor Party, asked Portland voters if the city council should support the creation of a universal health care system. The referendum also

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Universal health care would save Vermont millions

Robert F. Smith, Rutland Herald

A study prepared by Office of Vermont Health Access found a single-payer universal health system could save Vermonters more than \$118 million a year over current medical insurance costs and cover every Vermonter in the process.

The study was the focus of a forum in Bellows Falls, Vermont titled Health Care for All. The guest speaker, Dr. Deborah Richter, a family physician, said, “the main problem with the U.S. health system is not that millions of citizens are uninsured or that it costs too much. The problem with the country’s health system is that it doesn’t really have a system.”

The U.S. has what she termed a loose arrangement that wastes billions of dollars in administrative

Board unveils 2 yrs plan at 9/29 conference

Harry Abbott, HC2K Membership Chair

At the end of the HC2K conference held at Seattle University on September 29th I presented a two-year plan approved by the board. It consisted of five steps:

Step one, rebuild the organization in the first half of 2002. Step two, encourage a legislator to introduce a universal health care bill in the 2002 session. Step three, mount a legislative initiative for universal health care in 2002 if step 2 fails.

Step four, lobby the legislature to

pass the initiative during the 2003 session. Finally step five, campaign for the initiative at the next general election in 2003 if step 4 fails.

In rebuilding HC2K we intend to increase membership from the current 5,000 members to 10,000. We also intend to persuade all members to take the following pledge:

One, collect 25 petition signatures per year. Two, contact their 3 state representatives per year.

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asked if the Director of the City's Health and Human Services Department should annually assess the effects of a universal system on the city's budget and residents.

Dr. Duncan Wright, co-chair of the campaign, said, "Voting yes on the referendum meant that Portland citizens support guaranteed, affordable health insurance with choice of doctor." Campaign members see the Portland referendum victory as a huge boost to their efforts to enact a statewide universal single payer program. Legislation passed last June created a 19-member Health Security Board charged with creat-

ing a single payer system designed for Maine. Legislation proposed by the board will be considered by the legislature next March.

"There is near unanimity that our health care system is broken and has to be changed. A universal single payer system is the only solution," remarked Janet "Jay" Houghton, a registered nurse and chair of MPA's Health Care Coordinating Committee.

Campaign co-chairs Tammy Greateon and Duncan Wright credited the dozens of volunteers and 14 partner organizations for one of the most incredible political victories in Maine history.

Health Care 2000

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Three, recruit 1 new member per year. Lastly four, contribute from \$15 to \$60 per year.

Lastly, to manage all these members and to assist them with their pledges we intend to set-up a committee in each of the 49 legislative districts.

While rebuilding we will try again to find a legislator willing to introduce a universal health care bill in the next session. But if the legislators who spoke at the conference are indicative, most likely we will not find any.

That will leave us with only one alternative - an initiative

drive, which is step three. Our goal in such a drive would be to gather 250,000 signatures. With at least 10,000 members collecting 25 signatures each we believe we can reach that goal.

Once we have qualified the initiative for consideration by the legislature we will lobby for it by getting a 100 or so members from

each legislative district to contact their state representatives.

Since step five for now is a distant possibility I'll leave it for another issue.

If you have any questions or comments about the plan you can contact me at either harry77@richpoor.net or h.Abbottharry@verizon.net.

Newsletter gets new editor

Greetings to all the readers of the Health Care 2000 newsletter. About three months ago I assumed the job of editor. This is my first issue. In the coming year I hope you'll find reading the newsletter both pleasant as well as informative.

We'll primarily try to keep you up to date on activities in HC2K and her sister organizations. But we'll also do our best to keep you abreast of news in the field of health care, mainly from the state of Washington but also from across the nation.

You can make my job easier by sending in news you come across, or stories about yourself or someone you know that are health related. And you could also help by sending in your opinions, suggestions or complaints. Thanks.

contact: harry77@richpoor.net

Volunteers wanted

Health Care 2000 is in the process of entering 100,000+ signatures from I-725 and I-245 into the HC2K database. At the moment we are looking for volunteers in the following counties to help us with this: Benton, Clallam, Cowlitz, Franklin, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lewis, Mason, Okanagen, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Spokane, Thurston, Whitman and Yakima. Volunteers will be sent a list of names and a database format, either on disk or via e-mail. If you wish to help you can contact Stuart, HC2K President at either 1-877-903-9723 or at info@healthcare2k.org

Health Care 2000 is looking for volunteers in certain legislature district to contact their state representatives. The districts are the 4th, 14th, 17th and the 26th. These districts are respectively in Spokane Valley, Yakima, West Skamania and East Clark Counties, and in Gig Harbor, Key Peninsula and parts of Port Orchard. We hope that a member in one of these districts will persuade one of their legislators to enter a bill on universal health care similar to the one recently passed in Maine. If you would like to help you can contact Mary Margaret, Legislative Committee Co-Chair at marympaul@juno.com

The Helpline Committee is now engage in a letter to the editor campaign to local newspapers to gain publicity. It encourages all the members that can to send at least a short note about the shortcomings of our present health system and how a single-payer universal system would eliminate them. For anyone wishing more information on this campaign you can contact Carolyn, Helpline Committee Chair at ape@u.washington.edu.

What is Health Care 2000?

Health Care 2000, or HC2K, is a volunteer organization working to replace the current inadequate health care system in our state with a universal single payer health care system. We feel that if countries that possess only a fraction of our wealth can have a successful universal health care system so can we.

Among our ranks you will find patients, medical professionals, youths, seniors, insured and uninsured. In the last few years we have sought to pursue universal health care by lobbying the state legislature, gathering signatures for initiatives, and educating the public through lectures.

Presently we are at the beginning of a new two-year plan. If you would like to help please fill out the form below. If you have any questions contact Health Care 2000 at 206-323-3393 or info@healthcare2k.org.

Help now! Send a contribution of ...

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 Other

Please make checks payable to: Health Care 2000, P.O. Box 30506, Seattle, WA 98103

VISA Mastercard Signature: _____

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costs created by the vast number of different health insurance companies offering various health plans and all requiring different types and amounts of paperwork.

Its cheaper to pay directly for the medical costs than to pay insurance premiums, said Richter. Every other industrialized country realized this long ago.

“Healthcare administration, which involves mainly paperwork, overhead and bureaucracy expenses, is responsible for 24 percent of all healthcare costs”, she said. In the past 30 years there has been a 2500 percent increase in the number of healthcare administrators,

Part of a letter received by Shirley Jacobsen of Bellingham, a HC2K member, from one of her neighbors.

Dear Shirley

We’ve just received our latest health insurance bill. The rate went up in mid term by \$100.00... We’re now both 60... If we take the average cost increase of 12% a year (which is on the low side) for the next 5 years, we’ll pay a total of \$53,613.95. Isn’t this crazy?... We can’t afford that, so we’ll have to drop our coverage... Something should be done about this.

Sincerely
Jim

while the number of healthcare practitioners – doctors and nurses – only increased by 159 percent during the same period.

The bottom line for Richter was that she felt single-payer universal coverage would allow her to concentrate on medicine and not on paperwork.

“The good side of this is that I’d be able to focus on practicing medicine without having to worry if my patient could afford it”, she said.

“In general, this is a better deal for businesses”, she said, “and they know it. Its commonsense, and it makes business sense.”

Health Care 2000 has a speakers’ committee.

So if you know of a group that wants to learn about single-payer plans

Or if you are a member interested in becoming a speaker please contact Anne, Speaker’s Committee Chair, at annemt@athureson.com.

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