

HEALTH CARE



Initiative 262

2002

April 2002

Grassroots Organization Files Health Care I-262 To The Legislature

by Stuart Bramhall MD Pres.

On March 15, 2002 the Health Care 2002 Campaign, founded by the statewide grassroots coalition Health Care 2000, filed a groundbreaking initiative to the 2003 legislature. Initiative 262 is surprisingly short, less than two pages, and would establish a health care financing commission. The commission would be given 24 months to write a detailed legislative proposal to create a unified health care financing system to cover all Washington residents. I-262 would direct the commission to seek private grants and other funding sources, to use media and town hall meetings to solicit public input and sources and to use media and town hall meetings to solicit public input and to demonstrate the economic impact of their proposal on individuals, workers, businesses, health care providers, and the state's overall economy. The initiative would appropriate up to \$900,000 from the general fund for the two year commission. (for full text of the initiative language consult the Health care 2000 website at www.healthcare2k.org).

I-262's approach to health care reform is modeled on the successful single payer bill Maine passed last spring. In the past, health care reform efforts, both here and in other states, have typically become mired in arguments over the specific financing mechanism proposed. The lack of open, public debate has typically created an environment in which a variety of special interests, who are strongly motivated to find any way possible to defeat health care reform legislation, manage to scare the public and legislators into abandoning the effort. With their 2002 health care financing initiative, the Health Care 2002 campaign intends to create a process whereby doctors, patients, businesses and workers can take a new look at models for financing universal health care - and arrive at a workable solution that benefits everyone without causing undo pain for any one particular group.

The I-262 Campaign expects to print their petitions and distribute them to hundreds of volunteer signature gatherers across the state by May 1st. The organization has until January 3, 2003 to collect 250,000 signatures. If we are successful in collecting 250,000 valid signatures, I-262 will be referred to the 2003 legislature for consideration. The legislature can pass the initiative, amend it or ignore it. If they fail to pass I-262 exactly as written, it automatically goes to the November, 2003 ballot. Although the task ahead of us - of collecting 250,000 signatures - will require phenomenal energy and resources from the individuals and community groups committed to bringing about universal health care, the timing couldn't be better for raising public awareness of the possibility of major reform.

Once again health care is front page news. Owing to double digit inflation in health insurance and prescription costs, to the white coat flight of doctors pulling out of Medicare and Medicaid and even leaving Washington State, to the epidemic of bankrupt hospitals, clinics and physician practices and to the devastating impact of health care inflation on the state budget, most Washington residents have at least one family member whose health has suffered due to the current crisis. This provides our effort with the necessary volunteer base to place our health care initiative in every doctors office, clinic, hospital, nursing home and pharmacy and in hundreds of small businesses, churches and community centers.

Been There Done That... What Another Healthcare Commission??

By: Sarah Weinberg, MD
Vice President Health Care 2002 campaign

In view of the excellent work of the 1990-92 Washington Health Care Commission (aka Gardner Commission) and the 1993 state legislature, which passed the Health Services Act of 1993, many health care advocates ask why create another health care commission? Why can't we just implement the findings of the first health care commission? Unfortunately, in 1995, the Republican-dominated legislature repealed nearly all of the Health Services Act of 1993, and in the process tied it and the 1992 Gardner Commission to Hilary Clintons managed competition fiasco in the public's mind. As a result, any fundamental health care financing reform became labeled a "third rail of politics", not only in our state, but nationwide. As a result very few people in this state even know about the 1992 Commission or the 1993 Health Services Act, and of those who do, most dismiss both as Clintonesque failures. In addition, there are several parts of the 1992 Gardner Commission's work and the 1993 Act that looked like good ideas at the time but are unlikely to meet today's expectations.

For example:

- relying on managed care to control costs has become totally unacceptable to the public
- relying on market competition to control costs - when in reality costs of maintaining competing insurers with their advertising budgets and administrative bureaucracies have risen astronomically, and there is nothing in the 1993 model to address this.
- there is nothing in the managed care model to control the recent explosion in prescription drug costs
- the insurance industry was ready to do battle to the death over being forced to use community rating (everyone pays the same health insurance premium, regardless of age or health status) as required by the 1993 Act.

In addition, the 1993 Act, because it required participation of businesses, was headed for big-time trouble with the federal ERISA law. The drafters of the 2002 health care financing initiative believe that the only health care model that will sell in today's climate is one that covers everyone and costs less because it does away with the middlemen and that a unified system of self-insurance as a state is the only model likely to achieve sufficient administrative savings to accomplish this without sacrificing quality of care.

As we see it, the only way to get there is to appoint a broadly representative Commission and let them begin where the 1992 Gardner Commission left off. We expect the new commission to look at models being considered in other states and in developed nations that achieve better health status at far less cost than the U.S.

Tips For I-262 Signature Gatherers...

To help publicize the concept of unified health care (and to prove it could be done) Health Care 2000 (the coalition which founded the Health Care 2002 Campaign) filed two citizens initiatives in 2000 (I-725 and I-245) which proposed the creation of a Washington Health Security Trust. For the volunteers collecting signatures for I-725 and I-245, it was an unforgettable experiencing meeting and talking to hundreds of people from all walks of life and hearing about their problems with the health care system.

The street fairs, county fairs and festivals were all special experiences, due to the opportunity to meet and compare notes with other signature gatherers. Folklife Festival, Bumbershoot, Womad, Hempfest and the Puyallup Fair were all high points, due to the strong support for universal health care among the event participants. We were fortunate to have several super signature gatherers, (with June Schumacher and Kris Tieran achieving the highest counts) who routinely submitted 500-1000 signatures per week.

Tips we learned from our super signature gatherers included:

1. The only way to fill up petitions fast is to go to high traffic areas. Movie and cash machine lines, entrance lines to festivals and fairs are great places to get dozens of signatures.
2. Don't be afraid to approach passersby directly with eye and voice contact - think of something engaging to say: "Excuse me, could you help us fix our health care system?" or: "Could you help us get affordable health care?" If you discover a catchy soundbite that works really well for YOU, please call our hotline at 206-323-3393 (toll free at 1-877-939723) or email us at info@healthcare2k.org
3. Only registered voters should sign the I-262. We can provide voter registration forms for you to register people on the spot, but don't let this hold you up from approaching new passersby. If you register people, make sure you keep the voter registration form and turn it into the office.
4. Don't let people lure you into lengthy arguments or discussions about I-262. If they have questions about the initiative, hand them the brochure to read while you approach more potential signers. It's especially important not to get discouraged if people ignore you or make negative comments. The sooner you move onto the next person, the quicker you will fill your petition.
5. The Secretary of State rarely accepts a post office box as a valid address. The voter registration usually lists the residence address. If the address on the petition doesn't match the registration it will be disqualified. Illegible names are also disqualified.
6. Make sure the first line on the petition is correctly filled out. Try to get the first person to include his/her phone number. **Make sure the county column contains the name of a county and not "WA". This is the most common error.**
7. If people express interest in helping with the I-262 campaign, make sure to have them put their phone number or email address in the phone number column.

Acting Campaign Manager

On April 2, 2002 Chris Llewellyn became Acting Campaign Manager for the Health Care 2002 Campaign. Chris is a long term resident and a small business owner on Bainbridge Island with an extensive history of community service through her participation in a variety of civic groups. Due to the expense involved in conducting a successful initiative campaign, her prior experience in directing capital and fund-raising campaigns is a particular asset.

Over the next month Chris and the Health Care 2002 Board will work on a campaign budget and realistically appraise whether the Campaign can raise the funds for a successful effort. The Board has set May 1 as the go, no-go date. Given favorable prospects for funding a 2002 initiative campaign, petitions will be printed, and an office will be rented and a permanent campaign manger will be hired on that date.

We Need You!!!

Through a successful capital campaign we can assure ALL of the people in the State of Washington equal access to Health Care. Look at a contribution to the Health Care 2002 initiative Fund as an investment in the well being of the citizens of our state. Whether you feel like you can make a substantial contribution or a modest one an initiative campaign is won one signature at a time, one volunteer at a time and one dollar at a time. Every little effort makes a difference. "Many hands make light a large task"

This initiative campaign is truly a grassroots effort. It is time for all of us to pull together to form an effective web across the state. In order for us to reach out across the state we need organization and we need money. We need you!!! Consider what you can do to help move this initiative into reality. If you can't give a financial donation can you give time? Can you head a community fund-raiser, do you have graphic skills, would you work on a newsletter, flyer, or TV Ad. Do you have equipment you could lend or give the campaign, do you have office space or office help you could donate for a few hours a week. We need literally thousands of signature gatherers. Could you be a district leader? Are you a good speaker or are you willing to be a leader in the fund-raising drive? Think about where you can fit in and let us know.

Check out our wish list on the reverse of this page

Clip and return

I enclose a donation of \$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ Other _____

I can make a membership pledge of \$ _____ per month

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Visa _____ Mastercard _____ Signature _____

Name _____ Phone (day) _____

Address _____ Phone (eve) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ State Legislative district _____

Fax _____ email _____

Occupation if donation is over \$100 _____ Employer _____

I can help:

Gather signatures
 Data entry or office

Fundraising
 Work on Flyers

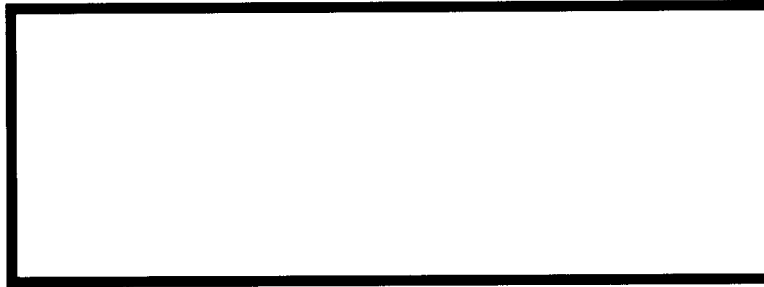
Phoning
 Publicity

Other (wish list) _____

Thank you for your support!!!!

Return to: Health Care 2002, PO Box 30506, Seattle, WA. 98103

www.healthcare2k.org



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US Postage
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Seattle WA
Permit No. 1445

**2002
CARE**



**PO Box 30506
Seattle, WA. 98103**

Initiative 262

Campaign Wish List

Look this list over. If you can help in any of these areas please indicate your areas of interest on the pledge sheet on the previous page. Thank you!!!!

Fundraising Chairperson

- Fundraising Event Organizers
- Area Fundraiser Chairs
- Fundraising worker bees

Signature Drive

- District Chariperson
- Area Chairperson
- Worker Bees (we Need Lots!!!)

Education

- Graphic Design help
- Newsletter Layout
- Write Articles for Newsletter
- Radio or TV experience or connections
- Educational Flyer help
- Speakers
- Any other Creative ideas?

Web Master

We need someone to maintain our Web page

Office

- Donate office Space
- Copy Machine or other equipment
- Computer equipment
- Data Entry
- Office Worker Bees

Sponsorship Opportunities

- Sponsor a mailing
- Sponsor a flyer printing
- Donate Postage
- Donate office workers from your business
- Underwrite a fundraising event/educational opportunity