



Health Care *for All* NC

www.healthcareforallnc.org

Welcome to the Winter 2014 issue of your HCfA-NC Newsletter

Inside this newsletter you will learn about the *NC Medicaid Expansion Efforts by Health Care for All NC*, and our *Faith-based Medicaid Expansion Efforts*. You will also learn about our plans for upgrading our website to increase stakeholder reach.

We want to receive your ideas and suggestions about your newsletter and ways to bring a better health care system to NC. What does health care mean to you? Send suggestions/thoughts to: mandie.j.carlson@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Your Editorial Staff,
Mandie Carlson & Mysha Sissine

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NC Medicaid Expansion Efforts by Health Care for All NC

By Gary Greenberg

History: Medicaid Expansion was originally baked into the Affordable Care Act (ACA), offering Federal support for states to newly cover health care costs for poor adult citizens with incomes below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. Previously, Medicaid was available to low-income individuals only if they were also Disabled, Elderly, Children and their caregivers or Pregnant, leaving out 500,000 able-bodied North Carolina adults, even if their incomes reach zero.

Sometimes overlooked in the Roberts Court's June 2012 endorsement of the ACA was its impact on Medicaid. Contradicting the law's obligatory universal participation, the Supremes made it optional state-by-state. For several months, the HUGE financial advantages of free (for 3 years) and later 90% Federal subsidization of the offer led many to expect that states would accept the opportunity and follow the recommendations of major clinical and public health organizations, including the NC Institute of Medicine.

Instead, in January 2013, NC Senate Bill 4 was passed by the Senate, then by the House, and signed by Governor McCrory, blocking Medicaid Expansion by declining the Federal funds available to pay for it. Despite participation by "white-coat" professional groups, grassroots efforts at Moral Monday rallies and 80,000 participants at HKonJ (Historic Thousands on Jones St.), there's been no change in plans in the N.C. Legislature, which would have to repeal SB 4, or the Statehouse.

Many expected that the Governor's position would shift first, after finding opportunity to declare that the "broken" financial model of current Medicaid was "fixed." This effort at Reform of current Medicaid will almost surely increase providers' incentives to accept financial risk for some of the costs of care for Medicaid recipients. Discussions about this structure remain fractious,

but most believe that Expansion is contingent on a Reform of the prior system.

Current Status of Policy and Politics: In October 2014, Secretary Wos of the NC Department of Health and Human Services predicted that efforts to accept Federal support to expand Medicaid would begin "soon". However, since that time, the electoral promotion of Thom Tillis from Speaker of the NC House to U.S. Senator seemed to signal public acceptance of ACA resistance. Tillis' replacement, selected by the Republican Caucus in November, is Asheboro Rep. Tim Moore. In his very first press contact, to-be-Speaker Moore explicitly opposed any consideration of Medicaid Expansion.

Grassroots Activism and Policy Options: Two ongoing collaborative groups of grassroots and nonprofit organizations and professional associations (with overlapping membership) are working together to support Expansion.

A "Policy Group" (led by the brilliant wonks at the Health Access Coalition of the NC Justice Center) is monitoring the Administration's likely effort to follow other Republican governors, seeking a Federal Waiver to modify the traditional governmental Medicaid program. These include private management, varying details regarding participant qualifications and benefit packages, and cost-sharing with both patients and providers. Examples of waiver programs include accepted programs in Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania, with applications still pending from Indiana, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming.

Another active "Advocacy Group" is also working to spread awareness of the human consequences and to seek public support. This group plans outreach through:

- Support for county and city councils' consideration of Resolutions endorsing Expansion

(cont.)

- Preparation of kits for congregations' endorsement for Expansion
- Establishing a [petition website](#) for individuals to sign, endorsing Expansion
- Building an informal online roster of self-reporting individuals (with compelling stories) detailing the human costs of health care barriers, in a state-wide web-site named "NC Left Me Out", modeled on "[TX Left Me Out](#)" and "[MS Left Me Out](#)"

HCfANC Board Members have been energetically present in both groups, and have taken the lead on the faith-based online petition and Resolutions for congregations to endorse Medicaid Expansion. We welcome any member's interest to join these activities.

Faith-based Medicaid Expansion Efforts Move On

By Bill Murray and Jonathan Kotch

Bill and Jonathan rewrote our Faith-based Medicaid Expansion Resolution to make it more interfaith. So far four congregations in the Triangle area (three churches and one synagogue) have edited and passed Medicaid Expansion Resolutions specific to their respective faiths or denominations, but based on our model. For example, a Resolution written by Rev. Rick Edens, summarizing the many resolutions the United Church of Christ (UCC) has passed since the 1970's advocating health care for all, was based on our Faith-based Resolution. Subsequently, the statewide UCC conference passed that resolution with over 200 churches in attendance. We urge you to contact your congregation to pass a similar resolution.

Health Care for All NC then applied for and received a \$500 grant from MoveOn.org to create a mechanism for expanding the Faith-based Medicaid Expansion effort statewide. We used the

money to create a website, www.expandmedicaidnownc.org, for folks to sign a faith-based petition urging Governor McCrory to expand Medicaid. (HAVE YOU SIGNED?) That petition has a check-box for signers to indicate that they would like a presentation of the Resolution to Expand Medicaid at their congregations. LET US KNOW (jbkotch@yahoo.com or bill-murray2929@gmail.com) if you would like to make such a presentation (we will provide the Powerpoint™) AND/OR if you would like such a presentation at your congregation.

Website Upgrades on Track for January 2015

By Claudia Prose

Coming soon! Health Care for All NC's website is upgrading with a complete renovation. It will feature a sharp new look, be easy to navigate, and fill up with a wealth of information and inspiration. Expect to see the change, overnight and entirely new, soon after the new year.

Beyond a more attractive and less busy look, we have several goals. The website is our virtual office and "face to the world", so it must be inviting and make HCfANC more accessible. Some information about the organization's history and current leadership is good background for any visitor.

A key purpose is to provide timely information about events in NC, in the region and in the nation, that relate to a single-payer system. We want the Health Care for All NC website to be a rich source of information that will educate,

HCfANC Mission

To work toward a publicly financed, sustainable, quality health care system that is open to all people in North Carolina.

(cont.) inspire and motivate. Links to resources -- from videos to analytic articles to speeches -- will make a wealth of information a click away. It should be simple to learn about innovative single-payer programs such as Vermont's and broad-based efforts such as California's. They are shining examples and evidence of successful education and organizing.

Website functions are essential to build the organization in this digital age. The virtual office must allow people to sign up for emails, get involved and (of course) contribute money. Smooth functioning will make renewals easy for members and allow tracking of membership payments.

Recognizing the need for an overhaul, we searched across the state for expertise. We asked around. We visited hundreds of websites -- websites of activist and community organizations, websites of members of the NC Conference of Nonprofits, and websites of local businesses. The websites of several non-profit groups stood out. Designed by Chris Liu-Beers, they were appealing visually, informative, and easy to navigate. We found Chris at Tomatillo Design, pitched our program, and found a good fit.

We anticipate being proud to point anyone interested to the new website and invite their participation. The aim is to make it a useful tool in building the capacity and strength of the single-payer movement.

Your feedback will be very welcome.

PNHP Mentee Highlight: Rita Kuwahara, MIH

Rita Kuwahara, MIH, is a Holderness Distinguished Medical Scholars Research Fellow between her third and fourth years of medical school at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine. She currently serves as the National Global Health Chair of the American Medical Student Association and was recently awarded the 2014-2016 American

Medical Women's Association Anne C. Carter Global Health Fellowship. At UNC, she has served as co-director of SHAC, UNC's student-run free clinic and co-president of UNC's medical student research society. As a new PNHP mentee, Rita hopes to start a UNC chapter of PNHP to bring together fellow students, faculty and staff to advocate for single-payer national health insurance.

Prior to medical school, Rita completed her Master's in International Health at the University of Copenhagen. She completed her Bachelor's in Chemistry and Peace and Justice Studies with a concentration in the inequities in the healthcare system in the U.S. and abroad at Wellesley College. Her research interests include global cardiovascular diseases, international medical education/health systems strengthening, structural factors contributing to high rates of U.S. rehospitalizations, and issues of access to care and health policy in the U.S. and abroad. She has spent time in India, Ghana, Uganda, Moldova, South Africa, Ecuador, Kenya, Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom completing public health-related research, coursework, and clinical rotations. In the future, she hopes to combine her interests in health policy and clinical medicine to create a world where health is considered a human right and anyone requiring health care can receive it regardless of social/economic status.





**Board
Member
Highlight:
Eleanor
Elaine
Greene,
MD, MPH**

Dr. Greene earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Technology from Wake Forest University. She received a Doctor of Medicine Degree and Master of Public Health in Maternal and Child Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She completed her residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. A member of the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology, she was certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1988. While she is interested in all aspects of the practice of Obstetrics and Gynecology, she recently decided to focus on Women's Health and Gynecology. Dr. Greene believes strongly in supporting the health of her community and regularly speaks to groups in the Piedmont Triad region about health-related matters. In January, 2011, Governor Beverly Perdue appointed Dr. Greene to the North Carolina Medical Board.

Dr. Greene is a member of Doctors for America, a grass roots advocacy group of physicians and health care providers supporting affordable, quality health care for all, where she serves as State Director. She has been a participant in Moral Monday marches at the North Carolina General Assembly in support of Women's Health, Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina and other causes. Dr. Greene was an early supporter of Health Care reform and moderated a discussion on

Women's Health and the Affordable Care Act with Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Department of Health and Human Services, in July 2012.

Save the Date

**Our annual meeting on
Date: Sunday Jan. 11, 2015
Time & Location: TBD**

**An alert will be sent via our maillist:
To enroll, email to
info@healthcareforallnc.org**

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Thanks!