

Health Care for the Homeless Mobilizer

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council

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Organizing for Our Rights The 2007 HCH Policy Symposium

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council seeks to end mass homelessness by focusing not on safety net programs but on public policy issues that actually create homelessness. Like our predecessors in other social and economic justice movements, we recognize that only informed, motivated and mobilized public opinion will achieve any significant change.

To this end, we invite you to participate in the National Council's 2007 HCH Policy Symposium, titled *Organizing for Our Rights*. Symposium events take place June 13-15 in Washington DC, concurrent with the National HCH Conference. Join us in our nation's capital to demand the recognition and protection of the human rights to health care, housing, and a livable income.

Policy Priorities

The National Council's analysis of a broad set of issues important to ending homelessness has been articulated in our 2007 Policy Statements, now available at www.nhchc.org and soon to be summarized in an *HCH Mobilizer*. The Symposium will focus on a subset of these topics, examining them through the lens of human rights and discussing how to organize and advocate for our rights. The Symposium's policy priorities are:

- HR 676, the federal single payer health insurance legislation, which will help secure the right to health care;
- the National Housing Trust Fund, which will advance right to housing;
- reauthorization of and increased appropriations for the Consolidated Health Center program, including the Health Care for the Homeless Program, to maintain and build an infrastructure of care for uninsured people while health insurance is secured; and
- reauthorization of and increased appropriations for important mainstream and targeted programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Symposium Events

Congressional Visits The crucial policy issues will be decided by the members of the United States Congress. The National Council strongly encourages those who will be in Washington DC for the annual HCH meetings to make appointments NOW to visit your Senators or Representatives during the meetings. Materials to support these visits will be provided at Symposium sessions and on-line at www.nhchc.org. See **ACTION** below regarding scheduling the meeting.

Congressional Briefing The National Council will conduct a Briefing on Homelessness and Health for Senators, Representatives and their staff on Wednesday, June 13, 2007 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. in Room 121 of the House Cannon Office Building. Please encourage them to attend.

Symposium Plenary On Friday morning, June 15, Robert Aldridge will deliver the annual Susan L. Neibacher Address. Mr. Aldridge is the President of the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (<http://www.feantsa.org>) and is the Director of the Scottish Council for Single Homeless. The National Consumer Advisory Board will present the inaugural Ellen Dailey Consumer Advocate Award to Joy McCorkle of Santa Cruz and Barbara Wade of Boston, recognizing the remarkable work and spirits of these two formerly homeless women.

Symposium Workshops will occur on Thursday and Friday, June 14 and 15:

- Federal Approaches to Homelessness, reviewing pending legislation that specifically addresses homelessness
- Organizing to End Homelessness, discussing how those who have experienced homelessness personally are working with services providers and policymakers to address public issues
- Housing for All, focusing on National Housing Trust Fund proposals
- Universal Health Care, focusing on the Single Payer proposal before the Congress
- Health Care for Homeless Persons in Europe, exploring the realities after enactment of national health insurance systems
- Civil Rights and Homelessness, addressing discriminatory laws and efforts to redress them

Friday Evening Rally The Symposium will conclude with a 6:00 pm Rally for Human Rights in Union Station Plaza, located on the north side of the Capitol building and close to the conference hotel. Come stand with us to publicly and passionately proclaim the need for Federal recognition of our human rights to health care, housing and livable incomes.

ACTION

- **Register for the National Health Care for the Homeless Conference and attend the HCH Policy Symposium.** Go to <http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/hchirc/conference/default.htm> to register. Symposium sessions occur throughout the Conference and are listed in the conference program, though they are organized and sponsored separately from the Conference.
- **Schedule appointments with your Congressional representatives NOW.** Find out who represents you and their telephone numbers at www.house.gov or www.senate.gov. Call and ask for appointments during the Conference with the Members or their aides for health care, housing, or homelessness issues of Congress. Also ask them to attend the Congressional Briefing on Homelessness and Health at 3:30 on June 13 in 121 Cannon.
- **Read the 2007 Health Care for the Homeless Policy Statements** at www.nhchc.org.
- **Contact** our Health Policy Organizer, Adrienne Breidenstine, at 443-703-1337 or abreidenstine@hchmd.org for more information or to inform us of your appointments.

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Please pass this on to your colleagues, clients, and Board of Directors.