

# Health Care for the Homeless Mobilizer

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council

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## Organizing for Universal Health Care DVD Release of *SiCKO*—Tuesday, November 6

*Four months ago, Michael Moore's latest documentary, SiCKO, swept theatres nationally and renewed the health care debate in Washington. On Tuesday, November 6, 2007, SiCKO will be available for the first time on DVD. The documentary explores the everyday struggles of underinsured and uninsured Americans – focusing perhaps most persuasively upon those with insurance and the limitations of health care financing and delivery in the United States. The film also draws attention to the troubling trend of "hospital dumping" and compares the U.S. health care system to those of Canada, France, Great Britain, and other industrialized nations. The DVD release provides advocates a new organizing tool with which to build continued awareness about our failing system and to renew local activity toward fundamental national reform.*

### The *SiCKO* Effect

Even before the initial release of *SiCKO*, pundits anticipated that the documentary would have "broad political impact." The film has lived up to its expectations, helped to restore comprehensive health reform as a top national priority, and has elevated the "single payer" financing model (long championed by the National Council) as a viable solution. Though Congressman Dennis Kucinich remains the only presidential candidate to formally endorse H.R.676, the concept of a "single payer" system frequently is included in discussion and debate – often in contrast to the incremental options advanced by Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Barack Obama, Mitt Romney, and other candidates.

### H.R. 676 and the Single Payer Campaign

As *Mobilizer* readers know, **H.R. 676**, [the United States National Health Insurance Act or the *Expanded and Improved Medicare for All*] was introduced in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress and has 85 cosponsors - the most since its first introduction four years ago. A full third of House Democrats, including some senior committee chairs, support the legislation. An increasing number of community organizations, city councils, labor unions, individuals, and HCH projects have formally endorsed H.R. 676 and the single payer universal health care system it would establish. Former Vice President and recent Nobel Peace Prize laureate Al Gore joined the campaign for "single payer" on October 21 by endorsing H.R. 676, proclaiming that health care is a "*right*."

If enacted by Congress, H.R. 676 would:

- Establish a single-payer financing system through a payroll tax of 4.75% (that includes the existing 1.45 Medicare tax);
- Maintain health care delivery through a network of independent private providers;
- Expand the Medicare program and eliminate private insurance companies;
- Extend eligibility to EVERY PERSON living or visiting in the United States;
- Cover ALL MEDICALLY NECESSARY SERVICES—including dental care, prescription drugs, mental health and addiction services.

### Spread the Cure

Taking advantage of SiCKO's DVD release a week earlier, the group *Healthcare NOW* will take "single payer" on the road beginning November 11, 2007. The *SiCKO-Cure Road Show* will leave Chicago, make stops throughout the southeast, and end in Pittsburgh. It targets Congressional districts where additional 676 co-sponsors might be convinced. The health care riders will leaflet, hold public meetings, show *SiCKO* and record on video the health care stories of local people.

The National Council calls upon *Mobilizer* readers to join the campaign for single payer health care and get involved in the health care debate.

### ACTION:

- **Organize local viewings of *SiCKO* followed by a debriefing session about H.R. 676.** Hold special meetings of HCH staff, Consumer Advisory Boards and Boards of Directors to watch and discuss the film. Invite community partners. Hold viewing parties with friends and neighbors in your home. Be sure to engage attendees in discussion and in the broader campaign for H.R. 676. Resources at [www.sickocure.org](http://www.sickocure.org) or at [www.nhchc.org/universalhealthcoverage.html](http://www.nhchc.org/universalhealthcoverage.html) can help inform your discussions.
- **Call, write or visit your Members of Congress.** Advocates continue to secure new co-sponsors of H.R. 676 and to advance the introduction of companion legislation in the Senate. Encourage your Representative to sponsor H.R. 676 and ask your Senator to introduce a companion bill. Find out who represents you at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) or [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- **Endorse H.R. 676.** Seek your organization's endorsement as a means of building local and national consensus around the single payer solution. Approach other local coalitions, City and County Councils, and community interest groups. Sign on by visiting Physicians for a National Health Plan at <http://pnhp.org/resolution/>.
- **For more information** contact the National Council's Health Policy Organizer, Adrienne Breidenstine, at [abreidenstine@hchmd.org](mailto:abreidenstine@hchmd.org) or call 443-703-1337.

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