



NJSIUC Position Paper

Official Version

For HR 676 One Plan, One Nation Campaign

And regarding Health Care for America Now

The Trojan Horse

On July 8, 2008, a coalition of organizations called Health Care for America Now (HCAN) announced a campaign for healthcare reform. A spokesperson for the group stated that they plan to run a multi-million dollar ad campaign and will promote affordable health care reform that offers a mix of public funding and private insurance.

The New Jersey State Industrial Union Council (IUC) will not advocate continuing the for-profit system, and allowing the Insurance Companies unabated control and power over the people of New Jersey and this Country. The HCAN coalition is trying to fool many of you who also work with us to promote single payer non-profit health care as embodied in HR 676, The National Insurance legislation introduced by Congressman John Conyers. This is not the time to compromise our principles on HR 676, what we all consider to be the Crown Jewel of healthcare plans.

In New Jersey, Healthcare-Now (HCN) and the IUC have partnered to support HR 676 and the single payer system. We welcome all to the debate and applaud all activities that expose the role of the profit making health insurance and drug companies as the cause of our current health system's failures.

The name of the new group HCAN is so similar to HCN, it is important that we point out what distinguishes their position from ours. Even more important is the policy issue that is crucial to the success of the Single-payer health care movement. We must get it right this time around.

First, It must make economic and policy sense. We have seen bad policy fail repeatedly as state after state (i.e. Massachusetts) has under funded their plan, the Insurance companies are controlling cost and coverage and if the people don't sign up they will be penalized \$1000.00 a year. The initial surrender to include the private insurance industry in these state bills has sadly undermined all of these well intentioned efforts, and all states are now struggling with the costs of care in these times of economic hardship. On top of it all they want us to pay as individuals, with gas, food and energy cost going through the roof. Many people are struggling to make ends meet now.

Here in our own State of New Jersey. The Single-payer system would save the state \$1.7billion a year on state employee health benefits. The Freeholders of Bergen and Passaic Counties have passed Resolutions endorsing HR 676. On the issue of charity care and hospital relief (reimbursement to hospitals for treating the uninsured) we can save the state 0.8 million. Which means hospitals would not have to close down and abandon communities because they would get paid for services rendered. So over all, that means the possibility of more money for TAX-PAYER REFUNDS or money for EDUCATION COST or PROPERTY TAX REBATES. Stick that in your budget!

From labor's perspective, HR 676 can create a real opportunity for white and blue collar workers. When negotiating a contract the final two issues always are wages and medical benefits. The benefits will always affect wages, and the employer will cry that their health insurance costs limit their ability to give raises. Union employers may negotiate and make workers pay some or most of their own medical expenses, cutting into the employee's wages even more. Even in non union sites, workers are simply at the mercy of the employer who may or may not offer to them the chance to pay for a low level health plan. If the workers are even offered a plan, they may be given a choice to take it and pay more out of pocket or leave it and have nothing. Single payer health care would eliminate both of these problems. In fact, Single payer can save states, counties and municipalities millions of dollars in medical cost for their public employees and retirees, a win, win situation **because everyone is covered**

Remember, in the HCAN campaign they are defending the private insurance companies who are Corporations, and so by law have a fiduciary responsibility to their shareholders first so to enhance their profit margins. The private health insurance system we have leaves 48 million Americans uninsured, 50 million underinsured, causes 18,000 deaths/year and accounts for half of the bankruptcies each year. We cannot place the fox in the hen house and then hope to regulate his diet.

No good reform can be passed without a grass roots movement and legislation that will dramatically change what is very possible to achieve for a whole nation. We have that proposed legislation in HR 676 which will bring all medically necessary care to everyone with **no co-pays, no deductibles, and no premiums**. It will make healthcare a human right and HR 676 a struggle for social justice.

So now the question for HCAN is can they offer that? The answer is NO!

All they have to offer is the same old rhetoric in its pandering to the Insurance Industry and advocating for its continuing control for affordability. Simply put keeping us all paying for it.

On the other hand, HCNOW and HR 676 offer you the following:

Section 102 (a) of HR 676 bill is very explicit about this. "The health insurance benefits under this act cover all medically necessary services, including at least the following: (1) primary care and prevention; (2) inpatient care; (3) outpatient care; (4) emergency care; (5) prescription drugs; (6) durable medical equipment; (7) long term care; (8) mental health services; (9) the full scope of dental services (other than cosmetic dentistry); (10) substance abuse treatment services; (11) chiropractic services; (12) basic vision care and vision correction (other than laser vision correction for cosmetic purposes); (13) hearing services, including coverage of hearing aids." Section 102 (c) states "No cost sharing – No deductibles, co-payments, co-insurance or other cost-sharing shall be imposed with regard to covered benefits."

At no extra cost to you! So why would you want to compromise these principals and continue to feed a Trillion dollar cash cow Industry and get the same old for-profit system based on GREED and coverage limitations. In other words, who do you want to decide your needed care? You and your Doctor can make that call. Or the Insurance Company can decide if you LIVE or DIE?

We encourage our friends working on health reform to take heart. This well kept secret of the single-payer system doesn't make the nightly news, but support for HR 676 has grown so rapidly that it makes your head spin.

The following points are some of what we have accomplished:

1. HR 676 has 90 co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives. It has been endorsed by the Kentucky and New Hampshire Houses of Representatives, the New York State Assembly, and by dozens of cities and counties from Baltimore to San Francisco and from Warren County, Tennessee, to majority Republican Rensselaer County in New York.

2. The recent General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA proclaimed single payer, universal national health insurance "the program that best responds to the moral imperative of the gospel."

3. The General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalists recently endorsed HR 676.

4. The U.S. Conference of Mayors, representing over 1,000 cities with populations over 30,000, unanimously adopted a resolution in support of HR 676.

5. Union support for HR 676 grows daily and includes 35 state AFL-CIO federations and in NJ it has been endorsed by the NJSIUC, 110 central labor councils, (8 in NJ) over 445 union organizations and an expanding number of international unions that have endorsed HR 676 to name a few are UAW, NEA, ILWU, NALC, IAM, Plumbers & Pipefitters (UA), Musicians (AFM), UE, CNA/NNOC, IFPTE, OPEIU, UTU and most recently AFT.

6. In New Jersey the IUC is working together with it's affiliates and other Unions (i.e. IFPTE, UE, Steelworkers, UTU, ATU, RWDSU, GCC and BMW Teamsters, CWA, AFT, UAW to name a few. We have also joined with church and community groups such as the Peoples Organization for Progress (POP), NOW-NJ, Garden State Equality, Peace and Justice Coalition, USLAW, NJS NAACP, Ocean/ Monmouth DFA/PDA, Progressive Democracy South Jersey, the Labor Party, Essex Green Party and the Hudson and Bergen County Freeholders have passed resolutions endorsing HR 676. We're keeping busy and still growing.

In a rising revolt against insurance companies that deny care and interfere with practice decisions, according to a study published in the Mar. 31 issue of the Annals of Internal Medicine, 59% of the nation's physicians support federal legislation to establish national health insurance, often referred to as a single-payer system." Nationwide, 65% of people believe that: The United States should adopt a universal health insurance program in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers.

In fact since Medicare is already in place we don't have to create a whole new program. This is the most efficiently run program of our government. It only takes 3 cents on the dollar to cover the administration cost. While the insurance companies take 30 cents to cover theirs.

Furthermore, the United States finds itself ranked 42nd in global life expectancy and 34th in survival of infants to age. Despite the fact that the US spends roughly \$5.2 million every day on health care, more per capita than any other nation in the world, Americans live shorter lives than citizens of every western European and Nordic country, bar Denmark.

Just as Organized Labor and other social justice movements ignited the fire that shaped the FDR era, so we must galvanize a health care movement that will mold the outcome of the next era. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called us to this mission: **“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”**

An accident or illness will not discriminate, for it does not care about your age, race, gender or sexual orientation. It will not matter if you are rich, poor, Democrat, Republican or Independent. When the illness strikes the last thing you need to do is to call your insurance to find out if you are covered. What you want at that moment is peace of mind and **With HR 676 you will be covered automatically!**

The Single-Payer system is about compassion for Humanity. We must continue to follow our vision in hopes to continue building support for the national, single-payer health insurance program embodied in HR 676. We cannot join forces with a coalition that will leave the same failed system in place.

We can not be fooled by HCAN, for it is nothing more than a **Trojan Horse**. It may look good from the outside, but as they say it's what inside that counts and “the devil is in the details”. It essentially calls for keeping the insurance companies controlling the affordable markets, making excessive profits and continuing the bureaucratic nightmare of red tape. These markets will mandate us to pay dearly as individuals into their system with our money or our lives! Do you want that system?

Healthcare insurance should be administered equally to all people. Everyone should have the Cadillac Plan, the Best of the Best. If our tax dollars can pay for healthcare to our elected officials, then why can't we use our taxes to pay for our healthcare? Why should we be forced to choose between different plans with limited coverage and extra costs, co-pays, deductibles and premiums?

The NJSIUC has created this simple message for its statewide Healthcare campaign which we believe say it all, **“HR 676: ONE PLAN, ONE NATION”** for all people.

The popular support for single payer is there if we all continue the crusade we started, which is to protect our rights, where all people are covered from **Cradle to Grave** and to have the Crown Jewel of Healthcare HR 676. Therefore, by doing this we can stand together and have the courage to speak the truth against waste and abuse of power to the same old system. Not to mention standing up to the excuses for insensitive delays of coverage that can cause deaths. We must continue to be passionate and humane for our selves our families and humankind. Therefore, let us stand together and take the initiative to use common sense when we decide **NOT** to open the door and bring in the **TROJAN HORSE**.

In the words of a true friend and advocate to the progressive movement the late Senator Paul Wellstone said;

If we don't fight hard enough for the things we stand for, at some point we have to recognize that we don't really stand for them. - Sen. Paul Wellstone

So now the question is, What do you stand for?

For those who want to read more commentary that attempts to clarify this issue, we suggest the following.

<http://www.healthcare-now.org>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rose-ann-demoro/why-is-health-care-for-am_b_111747.html Rose Ann DeMoro, California Nurses, takes on HCAN

<http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2008/7/10/75316/4802>

http://www.pnhp.org/news/2008/july/statement_of_dr_que.php Dr. Quentin Young's response (PNHP) <http://www.pnhp.org/blog/2008/07/09/a-policy-response-to-health-care-for-america-now/> Dr. David Himmelstein's response (PNHP)

<http://www.pnhp.org/blog/> PNHP's blog

<http://uprisingradio.org/home/?p=2874> Radio debate between Richard Kirsch (National Campaign Manager, HCAN) and Dr. David Himmelstein (PNHP)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/huffpost/20080709/cm_huffpost/111718 Yahoo News Posting from the Huffington Post analysis by Miles Mogulescu, Part 6.

Prepared by the NJS Industrial Union Council Health Care Committee

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