



CHC celebrates 10 Years!

CHC is very proud to celebrate 10 years of raising health! Over 100 CHC supporters and advocates attended our anniversary event on Friday, October 10, 2008 at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Nancy Zions, Vice President and Chief Programming Officer of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, kicked off the event by telling the audience about the "birth of CHC" and described how the organization has "grown up" over the past ten years. The Jewish Healthcare Foundation provided the seed funding to get CHC started. Shortly afterward, CHC received funding from The Pittsburgh Foundation and the United Way of Allegheny County.



The participants at the celebration also listened to a delightful video testimonial from Al Condeluci, CHC's first Board Chair, and took pride in the testimonials that were given by James Kindler, Barbara Taylor, and Dr. Ken Thompson.

Jessica Seabury Larochele, CHC's Executive Director, enlightened the audience with a slide show presentation of CHC highlighting the past, present, and future.



CHC also featured a black and white photo exhibit that celebrated the hard work of our consumers and community partners. Over 15 photos were displayed around the room highlighting their advocacy efforts. Watch the mail this December for a complete recap of the past ten years of Consumer Health Coalition.



Welcome Ted!

Ted Zimmer graduated from Allegheny College in May of 2008 before beginning his work at Consumer Health. He graduated with a degree in Biology, was involved in the Pre-Health Professions program, and the Political Science program. During his time at Allegheny he was also a Student Fellow at the Allegheny College Center for Political Participation that seeks to engage young Americans in the political process. Ted is looking forward to learning more about the role consumers can play in their own care during his time at Consumer Health Coalition! To talk to Ted or to schedule a meeting with him please call 412-456-1877 x202 or e-mail tzimmer@consumerhealthcoalition.org.



Statewide Health Reform

Pennsylvanians need health care reform NOW!



Over 700,000 adults, or 11% of people ages 18-64 in Pennsylvania, do not have health insurance.

These Pennsylvanians are:

- Less likely to receive preventive screening tests for diseases such as cancer.
- Less likely to receive quality treatments for serious chronic conditions like diabetes or heart disease.
- More likely to go without necessary or prescribed medications to control their conditions.

Two of these uninsured Pennsylvanians die every single day because they have put off care for too long.

The PA Health Access Network (PHAN) has been educating consumers and policymakers about quality health reform packages.

If you or your organization wants to help make sure that no Pennsylvanian goes without quality, affordable care there are things YOU can do!

Every person matters in the fight for health care reform. Help strengthen the voice of consumers and individuals by contacting us today!

Contact: Ted Zimmer, CHC Community Organizer, at (412) 456-1877 x202. Thank you!

Are Health Insurance Premiums in PA Rising Faster than Wages?

A September 2008 report from Families USA, "Premiums vs. Paychecks," confirmed this statement. The report published some startling findings about insurance premiums in the last 8 years.

During this time period, premiums for the average working Pennsylvania family rose a shocking 86.2%, compared to only a 13.4% increase in median earnings.

This means that premiums are rising an astounding 6.4 times faster than wages!

How will working Pennsylvanians afford quality health care in the future if we allow this trend to continue?

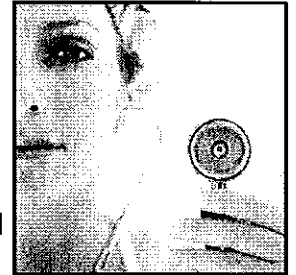
The Consumers Union collected stories from individuals across the U.S. as part of their "Cover America Tour." This picture of their tour bus was taken during their stop in Pittsburgh this summer.





Health Care Quality

Consumer Health is proud to launch a new, collaborative initiative that aims to improve the quality of health care for all consumers in the Pittsburgh area, and across the state of Pennsylvania. CHC believes that many health quality concerns stem from problems in the health care system. A consumer voice in the process of reform will allow patients, doctors, hospitals, and health insurers to work together and ensure that health care is patient-centered. Consumer Health will educate and engage consumers around a number of health quality issues.



Hospital-Acquired Infections (HAIs)

- Can range from infections at the surgical site to bacterial infections, such as MRSA, that are passed between patients and caregivers.
- These infections are extremely costly and seriously impact the lives of patients and their families.

Patients that develop infections:

Are 5 times more likely to die

Require on average 16 extra days in the hospital

Experience costs 6 times greater than patients without an infection

Public Reporting – Health Care Provider and Insurer “Transparency”

If you can research different cars or appliances before you buy them why can't you do the same with your health care? Health care is a vital service and consumers should be able to make educated decisions when the time comes to choose what hospital or insurance provider will be best for them. An accessible, efficient public reporting system would empower consumers to make these important decisions based on both cost and quality data.

Medical Errors

- Medical preventable errors impact the lives of patients, families, and health care providers.
- Medical errors range from administering the incorrect dosage of medication to wrong site injuries and mistaken patient identities.
- Medical errors in the United States account for an astounding 98,000 deaths annually.



Consumer Health is strongly encouraging those who have personally been impacted by medical errors or experienced hospital acquired infections, or have a loved one or family member that has experienced similar events, to **share your story**. Your stories will put a personal face on these issues for legislators and others. They will help listeners realize that errors and infections aren't just numbers, but rather events that tremendously impact the lives of everyone involved. With your help we can convince policymakers that more measures must be taken to ensure that others aren't left to suffer the same fate in the future.



INTERFAITH OUTREACH - HEALTH CARE VIGIL

Every great movement for positive social change in this country has been strengthened by the participation of the faith community. The call for health care reform is being heard and responded to by people of faith who believe it is a moral imperative to transform health care so it is inclusive of everyone, accessible, affordable, and accountable.

As we build and bolster our faith base, we are inspired by the response of faith communities in our work to repair a very broken health care system.

On Tuesday, September 23, approximately forty people, representing a diversity of faith traditions gathered in the park in front of Allegheny General Hospital for an Interfaith Candlelight Vigil. Moved by the rhythm of the drummers from "Drum the Ecstatic International Trio," participants listened to calls for reform and committed to the work of justice in building a world where all have equal access to quality health care.

CHC staff have been meeting with individual faith leaders seeking to inform and involve their congregations in the movement for health care reform. Highlighting each visit is the sharing of CHC's resource book for congregations. This excellent resource provides worship, educational, and advocacy materials suited for faith communities.

In the weeks and months ahead, we are asking faith communities to:

- Hold a health care Sabbath. This initiative asks congregations to spend time in study of the issue; focus their worship service on the plight of the uninsured and the call to justice; and to participate in an advocacy action. Resources are available from CHC.
- Weekly, lift up the concerns of the many impacted by our broken health care system. Pray for those who lack health care, for those who face a financial crisis due to inadequate insurance and escalating medical bills, and for those who have died because of being uninsured.
- Through letter writing, phone calls, rallies, and visits to continue to create the political will needed to make reparation of our broken health care system be a top governmental priority for the next administration.



"Of all the forms of inequality,

Injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Outreach and Enrollment

Have you heard of the Select Plan for Women?

Select Plan for Women is a new health benefit administered through the PA Department of Welfare that can help women to pay for services which may include: birth control methods and supplies; emergency contraception; pap tests; STD treatment and counseling; breast exams; and routine women's health services.

A single woman can make up to \$19,240 per year and still qualify! If you are a woman between the ages of 18 and 44 years, a citizen of the US, and a resident of Pennsylvania, you may be eligible. If you are pregnant, or have other coverage, you **would not** qualify for this program.

Do you know someone who lives in Butler County who needs low-cost health care?

CHC often gets calls from individuals who live outside of Allegheny County, are uninsured, and need to see a doctor. The Community Health Clinic of Butler County offers physical exams, treatment of acute and chronic illness, immunizations, prescription medications, and more. It serves people who are uninsured in Butler County between the ages of 19 - 64 who meet their income guidelines.

For more information on the Select Plan for Women or the Community Health Clinic of Butler County please call Leslie Bachurski at 412-456-1877 x200.

Consumer Spotlight: Sarah Goldstein

Sarah Goldstein is a Board Member of CHC and is highly active in promoting and advancing health in the community. She was introduced to CHC through the City County Taskforce for People with Disabilities. Not only is Sarah a member of the CHC Board of Directors, she also regularly attends the Neighbor Team meetings. Sarah has witnessed her own struggles with the health care system, such as building rapport with her health care professionals, balancing both her doctor appointments and work schedule, and expensive dental bills.

Sarah advocates for health care at her work and also by serving on many boards and committees. She serves on the Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities and is the Co-Chair for the Consumer Provider Collaborative Committee through the Allegheny County Coalition for Recovery. She holds committee meetings through her employment at Community Care Behavioral Health, which educates people on health services available to them, explains the complaints and grievance process, and helps people to advocate for quality health care. Sarah regularly attends the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Board Meetings in Harrisburg. She also travels throughout Pennsylvania presenting to groups on recovery and resiliency.

Sarah's advice to health care advocates is "To change the [health care] system, you have to use the system or it's never going to get any better." Unfortunately, she sees people not going to the doctor because they feel the health care system is failing. Sarah also advises taking a friend with you to your doctor appointments.





Health Committee for People with Disabilities



"We got it going on!" The Health Committee for People with Disabilities continues our strong advocacy, excellent education, and the constancy of creating a community where all belong.

We had a very successful "POWER LEFT: 2008 State Budget Red Dog Blitz" that led to some significant "wins" for the disabilities community.

CHC has been instrumental in creating and furthering the consumer advocacy efforts around the Mayview closing. We continue to advocate that the Mayview property be sold at fair-market value and that the proceeds from the sale be used to create a mental health trust account to continue to help persons transition into and live independently in the community.



At July's Mayview Land Re-Use meeting, the advocacy community represented strong with almost ninety persons in attendance. Our presence was felt and our voice heard as both Senator Pippy and Representative Kotik expressed their support for the creation of the mental health savings account. The editorial board of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* also endorsed this plan to provide needed funds to assist the transitioning of persons living with mental illness back into the community.

During the public comment meeting of the Mayview Land Re-Use committee held on October 14, again, the room was packed with advocates and several members of our committee offered testimony.

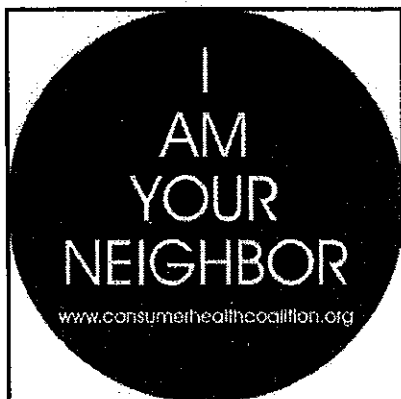
Our work in empowering persons to be proactive patients continues with the promotion of our "How to Be a Proactive Patient" guidebook and the leading of workshops that teach folks how to be proactive in their health care and ensure the coordination of both their physical and mental health care.

The next **How to Be a Proactive Patient** workshop will be on Sunday, 2 November from 2:00—4:00 pm at the One Smithfield Building.

In the upcoming weeks and months, we will continue our advocacy strategy around the Mayview. **Please watch our website and your e-mail for more information!**

Our Health Committee for People with Disabilities meets on the third Wednesday of each month, from 3:00 pm—4:30 pm at UCP of Pittsburgh. ALL ARE INVITED and our standing motto is: "We don't meet unless we eat!"

YOU HAVE A STORY.....SHARE IT! YOU HAVE A VOICE.....RAISE IT!





CHC Membership

Interested in becoming a member of CHC? Just look at all of the perks!

- ✦ **E-mail Action Alerts** that give you information about current health care meetings, events, and related advocacy actions steps.
- ✦ **Health Care Access in the News** is emailed weekly to our members. It provides an overview of what is happening in the media and health policy.
- ✦ **Quarterly Newsletters** that highlight organizational successes and provide notice of upcoming health care challenges.
- ✦ **Members Only Advocacy Workshops** that teach you how to speak with your legislators, presentation skills for public hearings and press conferences, and how to navigate the legislative process.
- ✦ **What is Public Health Insurance?** An educational training session for organizations that want to help their uninsured consumers.
- ✦ **Speakers** - Available for member organizations that would like to have Consumer Health Coalition staff present at one of their events.
- ✦ **Annual Meeting** - A great way to learn about CHC and the important work that we do.

Membership Level

Annual Dues

Consumer – Basic Membership	\$5
Supporting Advocate - Individual Membership	\$10
Advocacy Leader - Receive a free CHC T-Shirt!	\$25
Organizations with budgets less than \$500,000	\$150
Organizations with budgets between \$500,000 - \$999,999	\$200
Organizations with budgets over \$1,000,000	\$250

Name:

Organization:

Address:

City, State Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Renewal enclosed \$ _____

Amount dues enclosed: \$ _____ Enclosed is my donation / gift of: \$ _____

Please specify T-Shirt Size (Free with original Advocacy Leader Membership) S M L XL 2XL

Please make checks payable and mail to: Consumer Health Coalition

THANK YOU!



Consumer Voice is the newsletter of Consumer Health Coalition.

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WHO WE ARE: Consumer Health Coalition advocates for AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR ALL! We believe all consumers - insured, underinsured and uninsured alike— should be a part of health care decision-making. CHC actively collaborates with other organizations to amplify the consumer voice and ensure consumer involvement in health reform.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Andrea Fox, MD - Chair; John L. Tague, Jr. - Vice Chair; Paul Block - Treasurer; Chaz Kellem - Secretary; Michelle Boyle; Mario Browne; Diego Chaves-Gnecco, MD; Sarah Goldstein; Melissa McCoy; Joyce Schlag

ADVISORS TO THE BOARD: M. Francesca Chervenak, Esq. and Kenneth Thompson, MD

CHC STAFF: Leslie Bachurski - Operations Manager; Jessica Seabury Larochelle - Executive Director; Sally Jo Snyder - Disabilities & Health Community Organizer, Ted Zimmer - Health Reform Organizer

CHC INTERNS: Carlinda McDanel; Nigel Smith; Anna Vitriol

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