

# MichUHCAN

## Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network

8846 Robindale, Detroit, MI 49239 \* <http://michuhcan.tripod.com>  
\* State-wide (248) 477-7911

**Winter 2005**

### ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE BOARD

This has been an eventful year for MichUHCAN. The work done by the labor unions, DSA, Gray Panthers, and others that work with us makes progress possible. Three relatively new groups to the health care scene spent a lot of time and effort on Health Care this year as well – MOSES, MiVOICE, and the Green House. Stories about their recent successes follow.

Accomplishments of the year include:

1. Filing a lawsuit to declare that Michigianians have the right to access to health care;
2. Participating in the AMSA rally in favor of universal health care;
3. Organizing and participating in the Bridging the Gap Bridgewalk at Belle Isle;
4. Holding our major fundraiser in May;
5. Getting the administration to study the option of 'single payer' as part of its HRSA Grant;
6. Meeting with the House Health Policy Committee Republican members about bulk buying of medications for the uninsured and underinsured;
7. A group of Gray Panthers traveled to Sanilac County and got 200 people to sign postcards to their Representative to hold hearings on bulk buying of pharmaceuticals for the uninsured and underinsured;
8. Collected postcards regarding bulk buying of pharmaceuticals for the uninsured and underinsured at several other places including during Cover the Uninsured Week at the Health Fair; [Story about victory in this effort by MOSES and MiVOICE is in this newsletter]
9. Met with Governor and her Chief of Staff with the help of UAWCAP regarding the bulk buying of pharmaceuticals legislation;
10. Developed legislation trying to block the conversion of non-profit hospitals to 'for profit' institutions which will be introduced by Sen. Jacobs;
11. Met with two newly elected state representatives – Alma Wheeler Smith from Ypsilanti and John Espinoza from Croswell (Port Huron) – to discuss health care issues and collaboration for next year;
12. Website redesigned and up – [www.MichUHCAN.tripod.com](http://www.MichUHCAN.tripod.com);
13. Preparing By-Laws and incorporation papers as a non-profit corporation;
14. Beginning to raise funds for a staff person;
15. Working with the fledgling organization Union of Uninsured and Underinsured to give folks with too little health insurance their own voice;
16. Put out three newsletters;
17. And last but not least got the Health Care Finance Resolution endorsed, with the help of the Green House, by 10 organizations and it is pending in several others [Article in this newsletter].

You can see we have accomplished much with your help! We hope you agree and can donate to MichUHCAN. We are hoping to hire a staff person so we can even do more in 2005!!

### LAWSUIT UPDATE

The first legal move by the administration is an effort to get the suit dismissed for 'lack of

standing.’ This means that the State believes that there is not an injury specific enough to the plaintiffs, or to MichUHCAN and its members, to justify the court intervening. The motion to dismiss will be heard on Wednesday, February 2d, 2005 in the courthouse in Lansing.

The brief of the State does say that the case is not about whether ‘universal health insurance is a good idea’ and suggests the Plaintiffs work ‘politically’ to achieve that goal.

In response the MichUHCAN brief points out that over the last decade or more the State of Michigan has taken actions which have actively damaged the delivery of health care to the indigent and the working poor. These actions have included lowering Medicaid provider rates to the lowest in the nation; failing to plan a system which has enough money to provide coverage for all of us, but does not do so [several individual plaintiffs have no health insurance at all]; not acting to aid areas that have been declared ‘medically underserved’ by the Federal government; and limiting other categories of health coverage, such as Auto Insurance and Workers’ Disability, as well.

The MichUHCAN brief begins by saying:

*Defendant writes that the case is not about whether universal health care is a good idea. That is accurate. Plaintiffs allege that the state has already legislated that universal coverage is a good idea and that that statute . . . mandates that the state have a plan to provide access to health care to “all segments of the population.”*

Because there should be a plan for all, and because several of the individual plaintiffs don’t have any coverage or access the case should not be dismissed.

The case is scheduled for trial on October 17, 2005 at the courthouse in Lansing; 313 W. Kalamazoo St.

### **MENTAL HEALTH PARITY**

MiVOICE has taken on as one of its health issues parity in insurance for mental illness. Parity means that if mental illness is covered by your health insurance it has to be covered equally to physical illnesses. Gov. Granholm and her Mental Health Commission favor parity and most other states have already passed parity in some form.

If this is an issue you are interested in contact Gary Benjamin at the email address or phone number in the Health Care Financing Commission article and he’ll hook you up with MiVOICE or the Mental Health Association.

### **VICTORY ON PHARMACEUTICAL BULK BUYING!!!**

On September 26, 2004 at Callahan Hall at the MOSES and MiVOICE meeting and before 4 to 5,000 people Gov. Granholm said:

### **HEALTH CARE FINANCING COMMISSION RESOLUTION UPDATE**

In October 2003 the Detroit City Council passed a resolution that calls on Governor Granholm to;

**“ . . . establish a commission to study the financing of health care in Michigan and to make recommendations to change that**

*Today I am pleased to say that Michigan has joined with nine other states to pool our purchasing power [of pharmaceuticals] and we are extending the benefit of this discount to every uninsured Michigan resident so that you can benefit from the discount.*

Congratulations to MOSES and MiVOICE on this victory! MOSES which has a representative on MichUHCAN's Board, stands for "Metropolitan Organizing Strategies Enabling Strength" and is a coalition of 60 to 70 faith based organizations based in Southeast Michigan. MOSES health care committee began working just over a year ago. MiVOICE is a coalition of MOSES, ISAAC (a similar organization from Kalamazoo), and EZEKIEL (from Saginaw.) MiVOICE adopted bulk buying as an issue at a meeting in Okemos last summer.

In 2005 we all need to work together to see that this commitment from the Governor is honored and implemented in a progressive way!

### **YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?**

Could be, if your dues aren't up to date (check your mailing label).

Be part of the health care solution. Return this form with **\$20 dues** (\$5 low income). **MichUHCAN, 8846 Robindale, Detroit, MI 48239**

**financing so that all people in Michigan shall have health insurance in a system which is affordable; cost efficient; provides comprehensive benefits; promotes prevention and early intervention; eliminates disparities in access and in mental health care; provides continuity of care (is portable from one job to another); protects consumer choice; and, is easy to use.**

Since October 2003 nine other organizations have endorsed this resolution. They are the Sanilac County Commission; the City Councils of Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Mt. Pleasant, Pleasant Ridge, and just this month Madison Heights; as well as MOSES, the Michigan Aids Prevention Project, and the Henry Ford Health System.

Our friends at the Green House in Ferndale have been coordinating these efforts and the resolution is pending before several other government units now including Southfield, Ann Arbor, and Ingham County.

The Green House is setting up a database of MichUHCAN members so that we can get the resolution passed in as many places as possible by the end of 2005. If you have 'connections' with Council or County Commission members or any other organization email Gary Benjamin at [Gbenjamin@michiganlegal.org](mailto:Gbenjamin@michiganlegal.org) (or call him at 313-964-4130 ext 229) and he'll get you 'in the loop' with the coordinators from the Green House. By the end of the year our goal is to have 40 to 60 endorsements to take to the Governor!!

### **Join MichUHCAN!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_