



Non-Profits Unite To Create SC Healthcare Voices

July 9, 2009

SCHealthcareVoices.org

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Congressman Clyburn talks about the need for healthcare reform and listens to the crowds questions and comments.



Concerned Non-profits Form SC Healthcare Voices to Take Issues to South Carolina Citizens



Congressman Spratt addresses interested citizens on national healthcare reform in Rock Hill, SC, on July 2nd, 2009.

With 46 million Americans and over 700,000 South Carolinians living without health insurance, with many more underinsured, healthcare is everyone's concern. Unemployment steadily drives uninsured numbers up, but the working poor cannot afford healthcare either. A workforce without adequate healthcare has become a national crisis. Without national reform healthcare costs (\$429.8 billion in 2009) are likely to double within ten years. "Inaction is a choice we cannot afford," Sue Berkowitz, Director of SC Appleseed said. We must continue to insist state leaders as well as the US Congress must find comprehensive reform that will ensure access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Americans.

SC Healthcare Voices was formed by a coalition of non-profits, made up of SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, AARP-SC, SC Fair Share and the SC Small Business Chamber of Commerce in order to promote healthcare reform. We have held public forums for lawmakers and citizens to share information and ideas for solutions that can help convey the desperate need for healthcare reform. The website,



South Carolina citizens seeking answers to their healthcare problems listened as Congressman Spratt talked of the debate on the new healthcare package.



Sue Berkowitz, Director of SC Appleseed talked about the need of affordable healthcare for all SC citizens as she introduced Congressman Spratt.



Cindy Martin shares her healthcare issues with Congressman Clyburn.

shealthcarevoices.org, provides resources on available healthcare in South Carolina, while keeping citizens informed about day to day healthcare news. SC Healthcare Voices' goal is to keep South Carolinians aware, engaged and vocal in the current healthcare debate.

SC Healthcare Voices person-to-person campaign was launched with town meetings where congressmen John Spratt and James Clyburn heard citizen's stories of how they are trying to deal with their healthcare issues, when the current system is failing them.



Congressman Spratt

On July 2nd in Rock Hill, SC, Congressman John Spratt listened to Tim Carmichael of York, who can't afford the \$52,000 in treatment and therapy his 3-year-old autistic daughter needs. The Congressman heard Rosa Wilson's story of excruciating pain in her gums and the inability to get dental coverage under Medicare.

"I don't expect a miracle. I don't want a handout," Ms. Wilson, 61, said. "I just don't know where to go from here."

Over 700,000 uninsured South Carolinians feel the same way, and know healthcare reform can't come soon enough.. "It's impossible to say just yet what the final product will look like when it comes to a vote," Congressman Spratt said. "...The cost is enormous...and cost will be a key in determining what type of reform plays out. However," he reassured the crowd, "Lawmakers are aware of the urgency."

On July 6th, speaking to over 150 concerned citizens in Columbia, SC, Congressman James Clyburn stood firm that a bill be passed by October that provides coverage for 50 million uninsured Americans.

"We've been kicking this can down the road for 57 years," Clyburn said of federal efforts to provide healthcare safety nets for all citizens. Pre-existing conditions; Medicare benefits running out before the year's end costing the elderly money they don't have; fixing the out of pocket burden now on the insured rather than the insurer...These are just a few of the issues Clyburn hopes legislation will alter.

Cindy Martin, who is confined to a wheelchair, said she frequents the emergency room because Medicare does not pay the full bill for her medicine and Ms. Martin can't afford her monthly dosage. Those trips to the emergency room are also out-of-pocket, since ambulance fees are not covered, and are her only means of emergency transportation.



Congressman. Clyburn mingles with constituents after the forum.



Forum sponsors.

A breast cancer survivor and small business owner, Kim Neel uses 30% of her income on insurance and can't offer insurance to her staff because her pre-existing condition increase the rate too much for them to afford insurance.

As Congressman Clyburn listened to these stories of desperation, he emphasized basic coverage for all citizens is essential, just as choices of doctors or insurance plans are essential for those who wish to manage their own care. Congressman Clyburn spoke of the tremendous amount of taxpayer money spent now on a broken system. The difference is that national health reform brings effective and efficient use of taxpayer's dollars and controls runaway drug and insurance costs.

Next Public Forum: July 11, 2009 Charleston, SC



Congressman Clyburn will be participating in another public forum on July 11th, 2-4 PM, in Charleston, SC, at the International Longshoreman Association Hall. (1142 Morrison Dr. Ph: 843-720-7360.)

He wants to hear what other South Carolinians are thinking; what problems they are having with healthcare and what they seek in reform. Congressman Clyburn will talk about his ideas for solutions. Please join SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, AARP-SC, SC Fair Share and SC Small Business Chamber of Commerce in this public forum your voice counts. If you have a story you wish to share, contact Callie at 803-779-1113 ex: 105.

or cvanderbilt@scjustice.org

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center is dedicated to advocacy for low income people in South Carolina to effect systemic change by acting in and through the courts, legislature, administrative agencies, community and the media, and helping others do the same through education, training and co-counseling.

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