

Minnesota Universal Health Care Coalition Newsletter

February 2009

Feb. 25th Hearing of the MHP

Eagan Forum on Mar. 3

MHP Passes in 2 Committees

Budget Listening Sessions

New Look for the Campaign

Feb. 28th Activist Training!

Actions You Can Take to Support the MHP!



1. Constituents should **contact members of the House Health Care and Human Services Committee ASAP** to ask them to vote "yes" for the MN Health Plan at the Feb. 25th hearing. ([Click here](#) for a list of committee members & their contact info. If you don't know who your Rep. is, [click here](#) to find out your legislative district.)

2. **Attend the House Health Care and Human Services Committee's hearing of the MN Health Act on Wednesday.** Packing the room really makes a difference!

Date: Wed. Feb. 25

Time: 2:45 pm

Location: State Office Building, Room 200 ([Click here for directions.](#))

3. **Feb. 19-26: Attend one of the Legislative Budget Listening Sessions & talk about how the MN Health Act could solve many of our budget problems.**

[Click here](#) for a list of sessions & links to sign up to speak.

See end of newsletter for talking points.

4. **Contact the Senators who voted in favor of the MN Health Act to thank them for their support!**

Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee Members Who Voted YES to the MHP on Jan. 26:

* [John Marty](#) (SD 54)

* [Patricia Torres Ray](#) (SD 62)

* [Linda Berglin](#) (SD 61)

* [John P. Doll](#) (SD 40)

* [Sharon L. Erickson Ropes](#) (SD 31)

* [Linda Higgins](#) (SD 58)

* [Tony Lourey](#) (SD 08)

* [Yvonne Prettner Solon](#) (SD 07)

Senate Commerce Committee Members Who Voted YES to the MHP on Feb. 10th:

* [Kevin L. Dahle](#) (SD 25)

* [John Marty](#) (SD 54)

- [James P. Metzen](#) (SD 39)

* [Mary A. Olson](#) (SD 04)

* [Yvonne Prettner Solon](#)

* [Linda Scheid](#) (SD 46)

* [Dan Skogen](#) (SD 10)

* MHP Co-Authors



The Campaign needs your financial support!

Please click above to donate \$25, \$50, \$100 or MORE! If you would consider an automatic monthly bank debit (\$7.00/month minimum) please [click here](#) to contact Amy Lange for details. Thank you!

We Need YOU!

The MN Health Act gets its **first hearing in the House** Health Care and Human Services Committee on Wednesday February 25th at 2:45 in the State Office Building Room 200. ([Click here for directions.](#))

We need every constituent to contact committee members before the hearing **AND** all supporters to attend the hearing. [Click here](#) to see if your legislator is on the committee.

The "votes" are very close on this committee, so make your voice heard and make a difference!

South Metro Community Forum on Single Payer - March 3rd, Eagan

[Senator Jim Carlson](#) (SD38) is hosting a community forum on single payer health care and the MN Health Plan on Tuesday March 3rd from 7:00-9:00 pm at the Eagan Community Center. MUHCC and Physicians for a National Health Program-MN are co-sponsoring the event. All are welcome to attend to:



- Learn about the bill that would create the MHP (SF118/ HF135) from **Lisa Nilles MD** ([MUHCC](#) Board),
- Learn why doctors support the MHP from **David Mair MD** ([PNHP-MN](#)),
- Learn why the MHP is good for business from **Nancy Breyemeier** ([MIBA](#)), and
- Hear about a fact-finding mission to Canada from [Senator Mary Olson](#) (SD 04)

Many area legislators will participate, so this will be a great opportunity to not only get your questions about single payer health care answered, but also to have your voice heard by legislators.

MHP Update:

The Minnesota Health Act Has Passed in 2 Senate Committees This Session!

Senate Health, Housing & Family Security Committee - January 26

The MN Health Act passed out of the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee on January 26th on an 8-5 vote! The hearing was chaired by Patricia Torres Ray (SD62) as Senator Marty presented the bill. Thanks to health care champion, Linda Berglin, for signing on and voting in favor of the bill this year.

To watch or listen to the hearing, click on one of these links:

- [Video \(Real Media Format\)](#)

- [Audio](#)

Senate Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee - Feb. 10

The Minnesota Health Plan took another big step on February 10th when it passed the Senate Commerce Committee on a 7-3 vote. Public support for the bill was evident in the overflow crowd present, all bearing MN Health Plan stickers.

The vote was a straight party line split. Voting in favor were Democrats Dahle, Marty, Metzen, Olson, Prettner Solon, Scheid and Skogen. Voting in opposition were Republicans Gerlach, Vanderveer and Johnson. Let's thank them for supporting the MHP!



To read more about the hearing, [click here: http://muhcc.org/events/hearing_feb10](http://muhcc.org/events/hearing_feb10) To watch or listen to the hearing, click on one of these links:

- [Video \(Real Media Format\)](#)

- [Audio](#)



State Legislators To Hold Budget Listening Sessions Around MN

In response to the massive budget deficit, community hearings are being held around the state. **This is an opportunity for citizens to give input to their legislators on budget priorities.** Please attend a session near you. Speak about the MN Health Plan as a solution to spiraling health care costs which are a significant contributor to our budget woes.

- Check our website for talking points.
- Check our website for the schedule of hearings. (You are encouraged to sign up in advance if you wish to speak at a listening session.)

The Campaign For The Minnesota Health Plan Has A New Look

The Campaign, a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Universal Health Care Coalition and the Greater Minnesota Health Care Coalition, recently adopted a new logo. [Click here](#) for the campaign website.



Mobilize for the MN Health Plan Activist Training on Single-Payer, February 28th.

Space still available, but time is running out! It's fun and fact-filled! Learn the provisions of the bill, and how to educate, advocate, and lobby for its advancement. Hear from successful community organizers and network with other single-payer activists. This training will be held at the Brookdale Library in Brooklyn Center.



Talking Points for Legislative Budget Listening Sessions

Prepared by MUHCC and the Campaign for the Minnesota Health Plan

Note: The following facts demonstrate the devastating human impact of proposed budget cuts. It is no longer economically viable, nor humane, to support a bloated, fractured health care system that increasingly denies access to health care. We need a reformed, efficient system to provide health care to all. We need the Minnesota Health Plan.

The Governor's Budget

The Governor's budget proposal emphasizes cuts in a number of health care programs such as Medical Assistance, General Assistance and Minnesota Care. Under the Governor's budget:

- 113,000 Minnesotans, including more than 26,000 children, will lose access to health care. (MN Dept of Human Services)
- The ranks of the uninsured will grow by 20%. (MN Council of Nonprofits)
- Hospital payments will be cut \$365 million when matching federal funds are taken into account. (MN Hospital Assn.)
- 2,100 personal care assistants for low-income disabled and elderly will be cut. (MN Dept. of Human Services)

If the Minnesota Health Plan were enacted into law state government wouldn't go through this exercise because the MHP budget would cover everybody and would be separate from the state's general fund.

The Minnesota Health Plan would control costs by eliminating duplication and reducing administrative overhead of providers and insurers so these cuts would not be necessary.

Consequences of the Governor's Policy

Cutting health care protection does not cut costs. It just moves costs elsewhere, either for county social services budgets to pick up, or into the category of uncompensated care for hospitals.

In 2008, Minnesota's hospitals lost \$600 million due to uncompensated care (people not paying bills due to insufficient coverage or lack of coverage). That figure has more than doubled since 2003 and will go up even more in 2009 due to combined impact of these cuts and more uninsured patients. The increase inevitably means that other payers---private individuals, insurance plans, and governments---have to pay more in order to keep hospitals in business. (MN Hospital Assn.)

In 2007, average health insurance premiums per enrollee grew by 8.4% in Minnesota and enrollee out of pocket spending grew by 13.8%. (MN Health Department)

Under Minnesota Health Plan, the "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul" syndrome would come to an end. There would be no more shuffling costs from one payer, like medical assistance to county governments or to hospitals. Instead, one payer would be billed for all care and costs would be controlled.

It is estimated that with the Minnesota Health Plan we could provide health care coverage to 100% of MN residents for no more than we are paying now.