

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

RYAN WHITE CARE PROGRAM

HEALTHY START OF NORTH
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RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP OF
NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

HIV PREVENTION PLANNING
PARTNERSHIP



A Message

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven
Oliva



WellFlorida is dedicating this issue to opening up the dialogue on our nation's healthcare crisis. Far too many citizens live with the insecurity of not having their healthcare needs met, whether they are uninsured, underinsured or facing the possibility of losing insurance benefits due to health risks and/or employers being unable to carry the costs.

Discussion of the issue has been going on for a number of years. Some readers may have been following the "Ceasefire on Health Care: Finding Common Ground" campaign spearheaded by Senator John Breaux (D-La.). This campaign focuses on stimulating dialogue with leading Republican and Democratic policymakers and advocates in order to develop incremental reform to the nation's healthcare system.

The Citizens' Health Care Working Group has created various venues to open up the discussion on healthcare (see page 3). We encourage all of our readers to participate in the process—voice your views!

The United States National Health Insurance Act: A Universal Solution?



"...Fighting for healthcare for all: national health insurance is not only the best answer, it is the only answer to begin eliminating health disparities." Representative John Conyers (D-Michigan) spoke these words as part of the State of the Black Union forum in February 2005. Strong words indeed, and they echo the strength of his commitment to healthcare for all, which he resoundingly proclaimed two years earlier by introducing House Resolution 676 (HR 676), the U. S. National Health Insurance (USNHI) Act.

HR 676, originally co-sponsored by Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), Jim McDermott (D-Washington) and Donna Christensen (D-Virgin Islands), now has 68 co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives. In fact, HR 676 has picked up six new co-sponsors since 2006 began.

Not without its critics, the U.S. National Health Insurance Act nevertheless represents a ray of hope for those who support a universal coverage solution to our nation's

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Calendar

March 2006

15th Annual HIV Conference of the Florida/Caribbean AIDS Education and Training Center
This event is specifically designed to meet the needs of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses and clinical pharmacists providing HIV care.
March 31–April 1, Orlando
Visit: www.FAETC.org/Conference

April 2006

Diabetes Exposed 2006—Don't Be Fooled by Your Numbers!
A one-day conference and tradeshow, featuring screenings, seminars and exhibits designed to give people with diabetes and their caregivers up-to-date information about diabetes diagnosis, prevention, intervention and treatment.
April 1, Jacksonville
Contact: Paige Palmer at 904-730-7200 ext. 3064 or ppalmer@diabetes.org

May 2006

Florida Public Health Association Regional Conference—Adolescent Health: What Makes Teens Tick?
Public health work force, physicians, nurses, health educators are invited to attend.
May 3, St. Augustine
Visit: www.nefahec.org or contact Lynnette Pease, Northeast Florida AHEC at 904-482-0189 or lynnettep@bellsouth.net

National Rural Health Association's Annual Conference: Minority and Multicultural Health Conference
The nation's premier gathering of rural health leaders, advocates, practitioners, researchers and educators.
May 15–19, Reno, Nevada
Visit: www.nrha.org

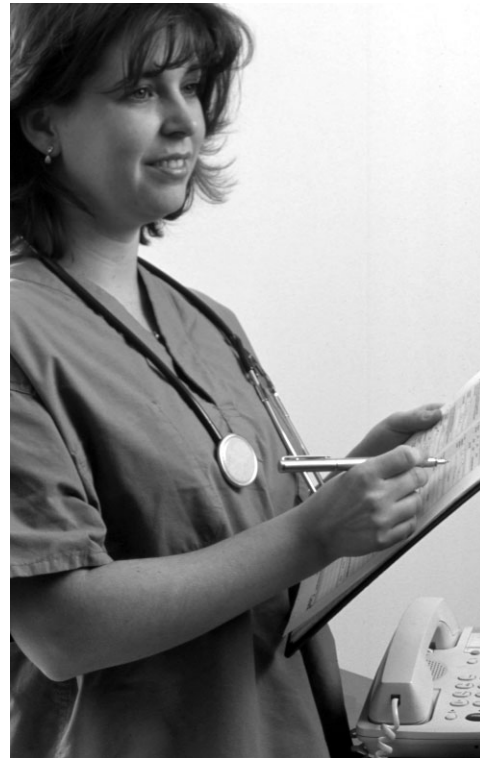
Florida Healthcare Association Nurse Leadership Training Program: Investing in our Nurse Leaders...Sowing the Seeds of Excellence
May 24–26, St. Petersburg Beach
Visit: www.fhca.org

July 2006

Florida Association of Community Health Centers 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration and Summer Educational Conference
July 26–28, Orlando
Visit: www.fachc.org

Visit our website:
www.wellflorida.org

The United States National Health Insurance Act, *cont.*



burgeoning healthcare crisis. HR 676 has noble aspirations, but what exactly is *national health insurance* and how would it work?

The U.S. National Health Insurance Act establishes a single payer healthcare system for all Americans. The Act calls for the creation of a publicly financed, privately delivered healthcare program that uses the existing Medicare system by extending that health benefit to all U.S. residents and all residents living in U.S. territories. The goal of the legislation is that all Americans, regardless of their employment, income or health status, will have access to the highest quality, most cost-effective healthcare services.

Key aspects of the proposed USNHI program include:

- **Eligibility:** Every person living in the U.S. and the U.S. Territories.
- **Benefits:** Program will cover all medically necessary services, including primary care, inpatient care,

outpatient care, emergency care, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, long-term care, mental health services, dentistry, eye care, chiropractic and substance abuse treatment. Patients have their choice of physicians, providers, hospitals, clinics and practices. No co-pays or deductibles are permissible under this act.

- **Administration:** Congress will establish annual funding outlays and the program will be administered by the Medicare program. A national USNHI Advisory Board will be established.
- **Cost Containment:** The USNHI program will annually set provider reimbursement rates and negotiate prescription drug prices. Payment to providers will include fees for service and global budgets.

- **Conversion to a Nonprofit Healthcare System:** Private insurers shall be prohibited from selling coverage that duplicates the benefits of the USNHI program. However, there are no prohibitions from selling coverage for additional benefits. Conversion will take place over a 15-year period, through the sale of U.S. treasury bonds. Payment will not be made for loss of business profits, only for real estate, buildings and equipment which are needed by the new program.

- **Funding:** Maintain current federal and state funding of healthcare. Supplement these funds with a modest payroll tax of 3.3%. A 5% health tax on the top 5% of income earners will also be levied. A small tax on stock and bond transfers will be implemented. The recent federal tax cut will be repealed and corporate tax loopholes will be closed.

According to data reported on Rep. Conyers' website, if the USNHI program had been implemented in 2005, healthcare spending in the U.S.

would have dropped from \$1,918 billion to \$1,861.3 billion. Overall government spending would have been reduced by \$56 billion and all 43 million uninsured Americans would have had coverage. According to Conyers' 2005 estimates, the average employer that provides coverage would contribute \$2,600 to healthcare per employee. In comparison, under the USNHI program, the average cost to the employer for an employee earning \$30,000 a year, would be reduced to \$1,155—a substantial savings for coverage that may be much more comprehensive than what is currently offered employees.

As controversial as it is ambitious, HR 676 has made surprising headway in Congress. It proposes to completely overhaul what its supporters believe is our flawed healthcare system. For more information on HR 676, you can visit Rep. Conyers' website at www.house.gov/conyers/news_hr676_2.htm.

Why a Universal Proposal?

Supporters of HR 676 look to the costs of universal healthcare systems worldwide. The table shows total and per capita insurance and underwriting costs for Germany, Netherlands, Australia, Canada and France compared to the United States. To supporters of HR 676, the comparison is telling.

Total and Per Capita Insurance and Underwriting Costs (2000)

Country	\$ Total (Millions)	\$ Per Capita
Germany	12,293	150
Netherlands	1,231	78
Australia	1,092	58
Canada	1,544	51
France	2,710	37
United States	57,743	214

What do you think of healthcare in America?

As part of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act Of 2003, the U.S. Congress created the Citizens' Health Care Working Group. The Working Group needs to hear your opinions to put together recommendations on healthcare to send to Congress and the President.

The Working Group asks citizens to give their answers to four questions:

- What healthcare benefits and services should be provided?
- How does the American public want healthcare delivered?
- How should healthcare coverage be financed?
- What trade-offs are the American public willing to make in either benefits or financing to ensure access to affordable, high-quality healthcare coverage and services?

Visit the Citizens' Health Care Working Group website and communicate your opinions on healthcare via a poll, comment center, citizens' blogs and discussion forums. Go to: www.citizenshealthcare.gov.

Working Together to Build Healthy Communities

WellFlorida is making a new home—a permanent home—for ourselves and our Community Partners. Our new home will be located in the Fort Clarke Business Center in Gainesville. But our services, and the services of our Community Partners, will continue to touch the lives of nearly 1.4 million residents in 16 counties in North Central Florida. We welcome your support in this endeavor.

Yes, I would like to help!

- \$25 \$100 \$1,000
 \$50 \$500 Other _____

Any donation you can provide is gratefully appreciated. How to donate:

Mail this form with check payable to WellFlorida Council.

Pay with a credit card by calling 1-877-678-WELL or go online at www.wellflorida.org.

WellFlorida Council is a 501(c)-3 charitable organization. Any contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowable by federal tax law. FL Registration No. CH17960. FEIN 237083163.

Please send me additional information on:

- North Central Florida Ryan White CARE Program
 Healthy Start of North Central Florida
 Central Healthy Start
 Self Managing Awareness Rural Team (diabetes/hypertension)
 WellFlorida Council

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

WellFlorida Council • 1015 NW 56th Terrace • Gainesville, FL 32605

Donate Your Cell Phones at the WellFlorida Booth!



Protect the environment and contribute to a greater cause by donating your unwanted cell phones at the WellFlorida booth at Kanapaha's Spring Garden Festival and the "Celebrating Art in Nature" Earth Day events in Gainesville.

Cell phones thrown in the trash end up in landfills and leach hazardous materials, such as mercury and lead. Keep your phones out of landfills by participating in the WellFlorida Cell Phone Recycling Program. For every cell phone recycled, WellFlorida receives a \$1 donation. Donations help serve critical health needs in your community. Donated cell phones are properly disposed of or refurbished and given to shelters for abused women and children, medical patients awaiting organ transplants, and areas where there are no landlines.

gardening supplies, arts and crafts, a children's activity area, entertainment, food to satisfy any appetite, and much more. The Festival will be held at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens on March 25 from 9am to 6pm, and March 26 from 10am to 5pm.

"Celebrating Art in Nature" Earth Day 2006 will be held at the Harn Museum on April 22 from 11am to 4pm. There will be outdoor displays, environmental and community organizations offering educational information, as well as music and dance performances representing a variety of cultures.

To find out more about WellFlorida and the Cell Phone Recycling Program please call WellFlorida Council, Inc. at 352-313-6500 and ask for Ashley Rose or email arose@wellflorida.org.

The Spring Garden Festival is a two-day event featuring plants, landscape displays,