



Dedicated to improving care for Colorado's medically underserved

Member Newsletter May, 2007

***CCMU IS COMMITTED TO ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, TIMELY, QUALITY
HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYONE IN COLORADO.***

It's Time to Celebrate!

April was an exciting time for CCMU and all advocates for health care and the uninsured in Colorado! We are celebrating the passage of two key bills that have been primary on our legislative agenda: SB211 and SB130. Molly Markert, CCMU's Executive Director, Jennifer Miles, CCMU's Legislative Director, along with the combined efforts of our members and volunteers have been championing these bills; in fact, recently Jennifer appeared on Colorado Public Radio speaking to the significance of these bills to protect and insure Colorado's children.

Senate Bill 130 will provide a Medical Home for Medicaid and CHP+ children. This "Home" comes in the form of a primary care provider assigned to each child. This bill, according to Jennifer, "declares that a medical home is positive, and requires HCPF to implement standards and systems to increase the number of Medicaid and CHP kids with a medical home." The goal of Senate Bill 130 is to reduce the number of children seeking care through emergency rooms and hospitals, through more deliberate and regular preventative care.

Senate Bill 211 aims to increase the eligibility and access of Colorado's 170,000 uninsured children to Medicaid and CHP+ services. The final bill, submitted to the Governor, includes *presumptive eligibility*, removing lawful presence documentation for pregnant women and children, creates an advisory committee on Medicaid and CHP+ enrollment and eligibility, quality measures and reporting for HCPF. Jennifer spoke with Colorado Public Radio

expressly about the difficulties families faced in wading through the requirements, forms, and documentations required for application to Medicaid or CHP+ only to be faced with a 2-3 month waiting process to complete eligibility. The *presumptive eligibility* portion of this bill will assume the eligibility of families where the paperwork has been submitted properly and in full. This will allow families and children to have access to preventative and emergency care immediately while their application is being processed. (To hear Jennifer's interview on KCFR, visit <http://www.kcfr.org/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=94> and search keyword(s) "Jennifer Miles.")

These are exciting steps in our mission to provide access to quality healthcare for everyone in Colorado. We still have to keep pressure on our state legislature, as well as continue to keep the public updated on what challenges the uninsured face in our state. Remember that SCHIP reauthorization is still pending as well as numerous other bills and the Blue Ribbon Commission is beginning their evaluation on proposals for health care reform in Colorado.

Legislative News from CCHI!

SB211 and SB130 were not the only triumphs for healthcare access and quality in April. Colorado Consumer Health Initiative's (CCHI) Legislative Director, Monica Griego, shared with us the news of the passage of HB1355 to protect consumers from rate hikes by health insurance companies. From Monica on the passage of HB 1355:

This bill repeals two of the seven rating factors

health insurance carriers use to rate up premiums for small businesses with 1-50 employees. There are two amendments to the bill that also passed. They were both approved of by the bill sponsors. The first amendment removes Subsection 3 of the bill which would have allowed for “cherry picking” or assuming the risk of healthy individuals only.

The second amendment is a phase-in amendment which allows insurance carriers the opportunity to discount customers up to 25% on health status and claims experience in the first year of implementation – but not rate up. In the second year of implementation there would be no permissible rating on either of the two rating factors the bill eliminates.

We now await the House to concur with Senate amendments and re-pass the bill. Basically, scholars and the Division of Insurance Commissioner agree that this bill provides a building block to the work that the 208 commission is undergoing. Both understand that in order to achieve true health care reform and cover the uninsured, more rating factors need to be eliminated in order to widen the pool of consumers in the private market. Moreover, there are currently over 116 health care related bills that CCHI is tracking, demonstrating that constituents and legislators agree that major health reform needs to begin now because Colorado is experiencing such a health care crisis. Despite having the 7th highest per capita income in the nation, Colorado’s uninsured rate is approaching 20% of the state population. In light of the fact that most consumers are insured through employer-sponsored insurance, it makes sense to stabilize the small group market by not allowing carriers to rate up small businesses on factors that are out of the small business owner’s control.

This bill passed because of the strong sponsors who deftly debated and upheld the principles of this bill, the strong coalition of supporters including health advocacy groups, providers, and businesses, the dedicated coalition supporters who testified on this bill, the team of 8 lobbyists

who coordinated with CCHI on lobby strategies and tactics, and the continued press coverage this bill received.

Thanks to all the bill supporters, including:

AARP Colorado
AFL-CIO
Autism Society of Colorado
The Bell Policy Center
CO Academy of Family Physicians
Colorado AIDS Project
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Citizens for Accountability
CO Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Education Association
Colorado Organizations Responding to AIDS
CO Public Interest Research Group
Family Voices
Kaiser Permanente
Mental Health Association of CO
Micro Business Development
More Flowers
National Federation of Independent Business
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
Rocky Mountain Stroke Association
Senior Lobby
Service Employees Union International
THRIVE: The Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Initiative of Colorado
Women's Lobby
--Monica Griego, Legislative Director, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative. For more information, visit www.cohealthinitiative.org.

Legislative News from MHAC!

The Mental Health Association of Colorado (MHAC) also announced the exciting passage of SB36 this month which expands insurance coverage for the following mental health conditions:

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Drug and Alcohol Disorders
- Dysthymia
- Cyclothymia
- Social Phobia
- Agoraphobia
- Panic Disorder
- General Anxiety Disorder

- Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa to the extent those diagnoses are treated on an outpatient, day treatment and inpatient basis, exclusive of residential treatment.

They would like to thank all of the SB36 supporters and the MHAC Advocacy Team for all their hard work! For more information on MHAC, SB36, and all of their advocacy work, visit www.mhacolorado.org or contact MHAC's Public Policy and Advocacy Program at policy@mhacolorado.org.

ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

The **CCMU Annual Member Meeting** will be Thursday May 17 at the State Capitol Room #356. We will munch on muffins while we network at 8:30 am; Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien will join us at 9 o'clock to share her perspective. Our Legislative Director, Jennifer Miles will give a hot-off-the-press report on the legislative accomplishments of the past session, you will all vote on the CCMU Board members. Please plan now to attend!!!

CCMU members will be receiving electronic ballots to renew the terms of several board members and ratify new members. We do have one vacancy for a new Board member. If you might be interested in serving in this capacity, please contact Molly Markert at 303-941-2244. Electronic ballots must be returned as soon as possible so that the results can be announced at the Member meeting.

Lastly, please remember to renew your membership, let your acquaintances and coworkers know about CCMU and its mission, ask them to join us in our efforts, and consider increasing your gift amount so that we can continue to do all we do.

MEMBER OPPORTUNITY NEWS

CCMU is always looking for partners in our efforts and mission. The Mile High Housing Fund is doing some amazing work in which we

thought our membership might find opportunities to partner or inform their own constituents.

Mile High Housing Fund

In addition to making loans for affordable housing development projects, Mile High Housing Fund also makes early stage, high-risk loans to nonprofit organizations that are acquiring, developing, and/or renovating facilities to serve low-income individuals and communities.

With the goal of using its capital to support community projects that otherwise do not have access to adequate affordable housing, MHHF provides loans with flexible terms up to 100% Loan-to-Value and often with a subordinate lien hold position.

MHHF offers predevelopment, acquisition, construction, and bridge loans up to 24 months and a mini-perm product with a term up to five years. Nonprofit facility loans can range from \$50,000 to \$1 million.

Over the last seven years, MHHF has approved 86 loans for more than \$30 million and recent loans have included financing facilities for the Boulder County AIDS Project, The Delores Project (Denver homeless shelter for women), Cross Community Coalition (community center), and the Sisters of Color United for Education (Denver health education service.)

MHHF serves front range communities from Pueblo to Fort Collins, the Denver metro area, and I-70 corridor communities as far west as Eagle County.

MHHF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit revolving loan fund that is a certified Community Development Financial Institution. They utilize public and private investments to accomplish its mission including the Enterprise Foundation, Fannie Mae Foundation, U.S. Bank, Key Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Daniels Fund, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority.

For more information on loans available or applying for a loan, please contact Erika Lindholm, Loan Programs Director (303-860-1888, erikal@mhhf.org) or Jeff Seifried, Executive Director (303-860-1888, jeffs@mhhf.org).

CALENDAR



CCMU's Annual Member Meeting

When: May 17

Where: Colorado State Capitol, SCR 356

Time: 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Contact Molly Markert at 303-941-2244 for more information.

Covering Kids and Families (CFK)

Health Policy Work Group

When: May 30

Where: 600 Grant Street, 2nd floor

Time: 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Agency Partners Work Group

When: May 25

Where: Covering Kids and Families

600 Grant Street, Ste 800

Large Conference Room

Time: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Contact Stephanie Arenales at Stephanie@cchn.org for more information. Call-ins for work groups are available.

COACH'S CORNER



Mt. Everest

"I'll defeat you yet because you're as big as you're going to get but I'm still growing," Sir Edmund Hillary exclaimed while shaking his fist at the world's tallest mountain. This was in May, 1953, and by the 29th of that month, he, along with Sherpa, Tenzing Norgay, was the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

Though Sir Edmund Hillary would organize further mountain climbing expeditions, as the years passed he became increasingly concerned about the welfare of the Nepalese people; in fact, in the 1960's he would return to Nepal to spearhead the construction of a number of clinics, hospitals and schools—a legacy left for the kind-spirited people who helped make his 1953 summit bid possible.

His greatest achievement had little to do with reaching the summit of the world's tallest mountain. Instead, it was the profoundly positive impact he left on a people bereft of such things we take for granted, education and healthcare.



CCMU is committed to ensuring access to timely, affordable, quality care for everyone in Colorado and we can--we will--we must achieve our goals. Your voice is critical to our success; if you have not recently joined or renewed your membership; please take a moment to complete the membership form following this newsletter. We will be updating our website with current legislative initiatives by the first of the year, so get dialed in and stay tuned to ways your organization can be involved in these exciting times. If you have any questions or need more info, just call...thanks!! Molly Markert, Executive Director, CCMU (303) 832-7727.

Is your event or program supporting the mission of CCMU or the medically underserved in Colorado? Let us know! Contact Eric and Amy Hansen, Newsletter Editors, at eric.w.hansen@earthlink.net.

COLORADO COALITION FOR THE MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED (CCMU)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Organization/Agency/Corporation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Suggested donation: _____ \$45 (individual)
_____ \$100 (organization)
_____ \$500 (small corporation)
_____ \$1,000 (large corporation)
_____ \$10 (student/other)

Amount enclosed: _____

May we list your business affiliation in our materials? _____ Yes _____ No

Vision

CCMU is committed to access to affordable, timely, quality health care for everyone in Colorado.

Mission

CCMU will achieve the vision of access to affordable, timely, quality health care for everyone in Colorado through education, advocacy, and facilitation of collaborative actions.

Principles

1. Health care coverage should be universal, continuous, and affordable to individuals and families.
2. Only a comprehensive solution will ensure health care for all while controlling costs and promoting quality care.
3. In the absence of a comprehensive solution, we will embrace policies and programs that improve access to quality care, expand existing health care access, and protect and strengthen the medical safety net.
4. We seek solutions that are sound, sustainable, and keep the needs of patients first.

Mail completed application with check to CCMU, P. O. Box 18877, Denver, CO 80218