

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

Speakers and Quotations

Maude Hurd, National President – ACORN

"Until everyone in our country has access to quality affordable health care, all of our other battles - whether organizing for a living wage or fighting foreclosures - are compromised. This campaign won't be easy - but nothing worth fighting for ever is - and we stand here with our allies ready for the fight."

Arlene Holt-Baker, Executive Vice-President – AFL-CIO

"Working families are suffering mightily under health care that costs too much, covers too little, excludes too many and is getting worse! Both workers and our employers need relief soon. If we fail to enact comprehensive reform in the next Congress, employment-based health benefits – the backbone of our existing health care – will disappear in short order. The unions of the AFL-CIO and our members are campaigning to Turn Around America on health care and will continue to do so until the job is done. We salute the new coalition Health Care for America NOW and are thrilled at the prospect of working closely with such our allies to fight for change across the length and breadth of the country."

Gerald McEntee, International President - AFSCME

"Today, we've got a message for our elected officials: If you put profits ahead of patients, get out of the way. Don't tell us about reforms that lack a guarantee of coverage. Don't tell us about taxing the health care benefit employees get on the job. Don't tell us that insurance company practices don't need to be regulated. Don't tell us that \$10,000 deductibles are OK."

Caren Benjamin, Deputy Executive Director – Americans United for Change

"For too long health care in America has been left up to the insurance industry and its allies who are focused on maximizing profits regardless of the consequences for working people. It's time to turn around the corporate-driven system and focus on providing quality, affordable health care for all."

Roger Hickey, Co-Director – Campaign for America's Future

"The Campaign for America's Future is proud to play a leadership role in the Health Care for America Now coalition. Profound economic changes are convincing Americans that we need to take action together to build a healthy, sustainable economy and ensure real security for all families – and that includes, first and foremost, making sure everyone has quality, affordable health care."

Elizabeth Edwards, Senior Fellow – Center for American Progress Action Fund

"Millions of Americans are sitting around their kitchen table at night, wondering why it is so difficult to afford the basics these days - especially health care. They come from all walks of life, but they have one thing in common: they know our health care system is broken, and they want a fair, common-sense solution that makes quality coverage affordable for everyone. Our mission is to make sure their voices get heard in Washington D.C. and everywhere else."

Eli Pariser, Executive Director – MoveOn.org

"Americans shouldn't have to worry that one accident or one bad doctor's visit could cost them their health and their entire life savings. Our members have been working for years to fix the broken health care system, and we're excited to be part of an effort that can make medical care for every American a reality."

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Reg Weaver, President – National Education Association

“Concern about this country’s health care crisis is front and center in our members’ minds. They know what it means to their students and their schools, and they know what it means to themselves. In order to reach our goal of a great public school for every student, health reform can’t be just a distant dream; it must be an urgent necessity.”

Marcia Greenberger, Co-President – National Women’s Law Center

“For those who have health insurance, women are more likely than men to have health coverage which has too many gaps and leaves them at great financial risk – 1 in 4 women says that she is unable to pay her medical bills. The high cost of care means women are more likely than men to delay or go without needed health care.

These facts are distressing, to say the least. And yet they cannot possibly begin to convey the personal stories of the many women who are forced to make impossible choices: between buying their prescription drugs or putting food on their family’s table, between staying with an abusive spouse or losing health insurance, between losing their home or losing their battle with cancer. No one should have to make such choices.”

Cecile Richards, President – Planned Parenthood Federation of America

“For nearly a century, Planned Parenthood has been advocating a prevention first agenda, investing in prevention and family planning programs that keep women healthy, help save lives, and prevent unintended pregnancy. That’s why we are proud to join Health Care for America Now and work with the broad coalition of partners for quality, affordable health care.”

Anna Burger, International Secretary-Treasurer - SEIU

“All across this country, nurses, doctors, home care attendants, and all SEIU workers are ready get to work to make quality, affordable health care a reality for every person in America. The time is now to demand results. The time is now to build a new, American health care system.”

Joseph Hansen, International President – United Food and Commercial Workers

“While there may be gridlock in Washington, there is consensus in America. The American people want solutions--not sound bites. We need health care for America now.”

Jeff Blum, Executive Director – USAction

“This is the human rights movement of our time. If there is one thing that our government should be guaranteeing each one of us, it is the basic, fundamental right to affordable and quality health care. This must be the birthright of every American.”

David T. Tayloe, Jr., MD FAAP, President-Elect - American Academy of Pediatrics

“As pediatricians, we know that preventive care early in life is imperative to developmental and educational success. Children are an investment, and they deserve high quality health care with comprehensive, age-appropriate benefits in a medical home. The American Academy of Pediatrics is proud to stand with Health Care for America Now in its quest to achieve quality, affordable health care for everyone in the United States.”

Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, President - American Nurses Association

“RNs at the bedside have been centrally positioned to witness how a dysfunctional health care system has failed the patient, the patient’s family, and our country. This daily fact of life for RNs has kept us at the

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forefront in calling for comprehensive change. Tweaking the current so-called 'system' is not enough. Nurses cannot – will not -- stop there. From where I sit, we cannot afford to wait. People are suffering and dying prematurely because the right health interventions are not occurring at the right time with the right resources or the right information. ANA urges the next Congress and President to make comprehensive health reform a top domestic priority in 2009."

David White – Small Business Owner

"I'm proud to have paid the entire cost of "platinum" health coverage for my employees and their families. I considered it the right thing to do. However, when our insurance doubled in just two years, something had to change. With over twelve percent increase in gross income, 2002 was a stellar year for my business. We all deserved a raise. Instead, a fifty percent hike in the price of our coverage in that same year ate-up more than we made: No one got a raise.

I had to do three things to make up the difference: choose a lesser-priced policy, raise our rates, and lay-off one person for six months. This is about more than the money."

Deepak Bhargava, Executive Director - Center for Community Change

"The crisis of health care hits communities of color and poor families the hardest. The majority of these communities lack coverage entirely, and when they are able to secure health insurance, the care they receive is abysmal.

The Center for Community Change strengthens, connects and mobilizes grassroots groups to enhance their leadership, voice and power. Now is the time for millions of Americans at the local level, all across the United States, to stand up and share their story about the health care crisis in America and join with others to write a new chapter of quality, affordable health care for all."