

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

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“Health Care for America Now” Thanks U.S. Rep. Chris Van Hollen for His Leadership

*Wednesday, April 15, 1:30 p.m. at Holy Cross Health Center in Silver Spring:
State’s leading health reform advocates thank Rep. Van Hollen for supporting Pres. Obama’s
proposal and release new survey data on public attitudes about health reform*

Silver Spring, MD – On Wednesday, April 15 at 1:30 p.m., Maryland’s leading advocates of federal health care reform gathered at Silver Spring’s Holy Cross Hospital Health Center to thank Congressman Chris Van Hollen for signing on to the [Health Care for America Now](#) (HCAN) statement of principles. Nine of Maryland’s 10 Members of Congress have signed the HCAN statement declaring that they are on the side of quality, affordable health care for all and opposed to leaving Americans on their own with unregulated health insurance.

See the HCAN "Which Side Are You On?" statement here:
http://hcfan.3cdn.net/517370ec1fddf45044_vbm6ivw3d.pdf

In addition, Health Care for America Now released new polling data examining Americans’ attitudes about one of the boldest aspects of President Obama’s reform proposal – his call for giving all Americans the option of joining a new, public health insurance plan. The poll found that voters overwhelmingly (73%) want everyone to have a choice of private health insurance or a public health insurance plan, while just 15% prefer everyone having private health insurance and 9% support only public insurance. The preference for a choice of public and private health insurance plans extends across all demographic and partisan groups, including Democrats (77%), Independents (79%), and Republicans (63%).

At today’s event in Silver Spring, Congressman Van Hollen said, “We need a federal solution... to make sure nobody is denied the health care that he or she may need... We cannot afford not to go forward right now. We need to do it to do right by the American people and make sure that people have access to quality,

affordable health care. We also need to this from a simple economic calculus because we have a situation right now where American businesses are simply not competitive internationally because they are bearing large costs in health care that some of their competitors are not... We need a comprehensive solution going forward. In my view and I think the view of the majority of members of Congress, that alternative has to include a public option... We need to make sure that that alternative is available to the American people.”

Health Care for America Now is the largest campaign in American history in support of finally winning a federal guarantee of quality, affordable health care for all in the United States of America. HCAN comprises over 700 national organizations representing tens of millions of Americans, and the Maryland members of Health Care for America Now include:

- ACORN
- AFSCME
- Alliance for Retired Americans
- AFL-CIO
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- CASA de Maryland
- Maryland State Teachers Assn.
- Md. Health Care For All! Coalition
- Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
- Montgomery Health Care Action
- NAACP of Maryland
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
- National Physicians Alliance
- Planned Parenthood of Maryland
- Progressive Maryland
- Service Employees Int'l Union (SEIU)
- United Food and Commercial Workers
- United Seniors of Maryland
- Union for Reform Judaism

"As one of the leading members of the United State House of Representatives, Congressman Chris Van Hollen's strong support for Health Care for America Now and President Obama's health care plan is critical to its passage later this year. Nearly 200 members of Congress have signed on to the Health Care for America Now principles of quality, affordable health care for all and opposed to policies that would tax our benefits at work and leave us on our own with the unregulated, bureaucratic private insurance industry," said Matthew Weinstein, Federal Issues Director for Progressive Maryland and state coordinator of Health Care for America Now.

"President Obama has called for action this year, and both houses of Congress have passed budget resolutions setting aside \$634 billion over the next decade as a down payment on health care reform, which will save us trillions."

America's broken health insurance system kills 18,000 Americans every year – one every half-hour – according to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. According to the Baltimore Sun, in Maryland in 2007, 762,000 people didn't have health insurance, or 13.7 percent of the population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 45.7 million Americans were uninsured last year, compared to 38.4 million in 2000, a 19% increase. From 2000 to 2007, health insurance premiums in Maryland increased by more than 64% while median yearly wages rose only 21%. Maryland's median yearly wage in 2007 was only \$36,723, but the average

health care premium for a family was \$11,960. In 2008, the average premium for family coverage in Maryland was \$13,068. By 2016, that number is expected to be almost \$24,000.

Health Care for America Now ("HCAN"), a section 501(c)(4) issue advocacy organization, is a broad coalition of nonprofit and political organizations that are working to promote quality, affordable health care for all Americans. HCAN and each of its members conducts and funds only activities appropriate to its tax and election law status.

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Statements from HCAN partners in Maryland

Terry Cavanagh, Executive Director, Maryland State Council, Service Employees International Union (SEIU):

“It’s simply unacceptable for hardworking families across the country to continue to suffer the consequences of a broken health care system. Today, we’re issuing a challenge to lawmakers to stand with us in the fight for quality, affordable health care for all—and we’re prepared to hold those same elected leaders accountable to their word.”

Patrick Moran, Director of American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) - Maryland:

"The cost of health care for average families is skyrocketing. Meanwhile, insurance company profits have risen more than one thousand percent-- in just the last five years. That's why AFSCME has taken a leading role in the HCAN campaign. AFSCME members realize that whether you have health insurance -- or not -- the system is not working. It is time to have a system of quality care that is affordable and maintains choice."

Tony Perez, Governmental Affairs Coordinator, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400:

"In every contract negotiation we're involved in, health care costs are the #1 issue. Workers are getting hit with big increases in their out-of-pocket health care expenses, plus they're giving up wage increases in order to keep their health care benefits. We need a solution that gets workers the health care benefits their families need at a price they can afford."

Betty Weller, Vice President, Maryland State Teachers Association:

“MSTA, representing 70,000 teachers, support staff and other educators across Maryland, is a proud member of the Health Care for America Now campaign. As educators we understand that healthy children are better prepared for learning. Children who live in households with high poverty, frequent unemployment, and inadequate health care often have greater difficulty learning in school. Children cannot learn when they suffer from illnesses or lack of proper dental or eye care, or are absent from school due to lack of treatment of a common illness. Health insurance that provides timely and adequate health care treatment will strengthen families and help to reduce some of the barriers that children and educators face as together they pursue a quality education. We are delighted that these five Maryland leaders have signed on to the HCAN campaign, demonstrating their commitment to fighting for quality, affordable health care for all of Maryland's children and families.”

Dr. Jean Silver-Isenstadt, MD, PhD, Executive Director, National Physicians Alliance:

"The National Physicians Alliance finds it is shameful that America is the only country in the industrialized world that does not guarantee health care to all of its citizens. Every day, we see patients who have delayed care for financial reasons and gotten sicker for it. Too often we watch people suffer and die who could have been comforted and cured. As doctors across medical specialties, we support the option of a public plan for everyone, and we support regulation of the private insurance industry-especially regulation of the egregious 'pre-existing condition' clauses that deny people precisely the coverage they most need."

Fred Mason, Executive Director, Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO:

"We applaud the members of Congress who have joined our grassroots campaign to help guarantee quality, affordable health care that we all can count on."

Vincent DeMarco, President, Maryland Health Care For All! Coalition:

"It is long past time for quality health care to be affordable for all Americans. The Maryland Health Care For All! Coalition will work hard with Rep. Chris Van Hollen to make this a reality soon."

Gustavo Torres, Executive Director, CASA de Maryland, Inc.:

"Affordable, quality healthcare is essential for everyone in the US. We need a healthcare system where everyone has access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services and no one has fear of accessing these services. In this system, everyone contributes and everyone has access to services; including all immigrants. If we leave out millions of people in our communities, the system will not work and will affect all of us. CASA de Maryland is excited to join HCAN and advocate for quality, affordable health care that we can all count on."