

# CNHP *Now!*

CAMPAIGN FOR A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM NOW!

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## **HEALTHCARE: CITIZENS CALLING CONGRESS HOME**

Americans are DYING for health care. People in 70 cities and states are planning the first ever Citizen/Congressional Hearings called by citizens themselves. They want their Representatives in Congress to attend these hearings and hear their views on the failures of the profit-based health care system and to respond to solutions that would provide comprehensive health care for everybody.

*Says Marilyn Clement, coordinator of the campaign, "We believe Bush's proposed health savings accounts will, in reality, put an additional burden on people who are sick and increase their suffering. The so-called 'ownership' society will move more of our tax dollars into private corporate accounts while leaving us with less healthcare and very little money for the priorities of our families."*

These Citizen/Congressional Hearings will be held in communities from coast to coast and will continue until the Congressional elections in 2006:

- Birmingham, AL
- Montgomery, AL
- Claremont, CA
- Fresno, CA
- Glendale, CA
- Mill Valley, CA
- San Diego, CA
- San Jose, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- Oakland, CA
- San Leandro, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Las Vegas, NV
- Cleveland, OH
- Portland, OR
- Aliquippa, PA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Pittsburgh, PA
- South Carolina
- Nashville, TN
- Dallas, TX
- Tyler, TX
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Falls Church, VA
- Arlington, VA
- Wells, VT
- Burlington, VT
- Marinette, WI
- Denver, CO
- Albuquerque, NM
- Pueblo, CO
- Alamosa, CO
- Fort Collins, CO
- Clinton, CT
- New Britain, CT
- Merritt Island, FL
- Miami, FL
- Gainesville, FL
- Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Chicago, IL
- Louisville, KY
- Detroit, MI
- St. Louis, MO
- Greenville, SC
- Hillsborough, NC
- Trenton, NJ
- Jersey City, NJ
- Atlantic City, NJ
- Binghamton, NY
- Buffalo, NY
- Elmira, NY
- Jamestown, NY
- Nassau County, NY
- New York City, NY
- Rochester, NY
- Westchester County, NY
- Ithaca, NY
- Boston, MA
- Cambridge, MA

## **What's new about these congressional hearings?**

Clement points out that, *"Citizens themselves are calling for these congressional hearings, not the members of Congress. Usually Members of Congress call for hearings and set the agenda and the testimony. There are more health business lobbyists than members of congress in Washington. This is a new attempt at democracy from the bottom up.. We want to know if our Congress Members will respond to us or will they continue to do business as usual."*

## **What is causing this uprising?**

Such hearings were first proposed in a December mass-emailing from The Campaign for a National Health Program NOW! *"We've had enough,"* says Mae Jackson, a woman who is in bankruptcy because of her health care costs. *"We cannot continue to sustain these attacks, profit-taking from our pockets, cutbacks of services, bankruptcies, unnecessary pain and death. Enough is enough!"*

**THE CAMPAIGN FOR A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM NOW!**  
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**ATTACHMENT**  
**GROUPS Scheduling Citizen/Congressional Hearings**

These hearings will be much more diverse than “official” hearings held in Washington. They represent rural and minority women, doctors and nurses, Catholic sisters, Native American tribes, Asian immigrant women, labor unions, musicians, human rights advocates, people in tiny towns and people organizing huge venues like Fanuel Hall in Boston on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Riverside Church in New York City on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Business people have gotten into the act too. They say they are hurting because of the rising payments to insurance companies, hmo’s and drug companies seen as a barrier to covering themselves and their employees.

- The first event will take place in St. Louis on April 1st. “You can’t fool us” street theatre with “Health Angels” will carry message on bikes on April Fool’s Day. Hearings will commence on April 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by a keynote address by former presidential candidate, Dennis Kucinich on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- In Mississippi a large group of community organizers, health care activists and Black farmers are planning their Congressional Hearing with Representative Bennie Thompson.
- The Lincoln, Nebraska group is being orchestrated by a musician.
- In Dallas plans are afoot to have a Congressional Hearing at a local television station in conjunction with the community.
- New York City volunteers plan to take their Congressmembers on a tour of the Veteran’s Hospital, threatened with closing by Bush budget cutbacks. The New York City Congressional Hearings will be held May 14<sup>th</sup> at Riverside Church.
- Organizers from small communities such as Wells, Vermont and Aliquippa, Pennsylvania want to know if their Representatives will grant them an audience.
- Tyler, Texas is another surprise in a very conservative district.
- The Nashville, TN coalition is led by a homeless advocacy group, an international labor union, and groups representing the 323,000 Tennesseans recently removed from TennCare coverage.
- Three separate events are being planned in New Jersey by Health Care for All.
- The Detroit hearing is being organized by labor leaders and community organizations.
- The Cleveland hearing will be led by a medical professor and the head of Health Ministries for the United Church of Christ.
- Four Colorado cities: Pueblo, Alamosa, Denver and Fort Collins are planning hearings.
- Kentucky organizers are first holding a dozen County Hearings all over the state in preparation for their State hearing.
- Chicago, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, and dozens of other cities will hold hearings later in the year or early in 2006.