



Uniting Consumers to Achieve High Quality Health Coverage for All Ohioans!

March 2011

www.ohioconsumersforhealth.org

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From the Project Director's Desk



Kathleen Gmeiner

Moving Forward –Protecting Our Care

March 23rd is the first anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, and it will be celebrated the entire week of March 21-26. [The five days have been separately designated to recognize the benefits to particular groups.](#) Monday through Friday these are, respectively small business, seniors, all consumers through the Patients' Bill of Rights, women and young adults. OCHC will release its *Report to the Community on the Implementation of the ACA in Ohio* on March 23rd at Columbus and Cincinnati. It is a time to call attention to the good things that have happened, and remember that **we must move forward** in our efforts to **(continued on page 2)**

The Affordable Care Act Has Been Good for Ohioans

OCHC and its member organizations have been working on health care reform for years. While we acknowledge that the Affordable Care Act is not perfect **it is a giant leap forward** toward our goal of affordable, high quality health care for all.

The more people know about health care reform, the more they support it. Many Ohioans are already benefiting from its consumer protections and crackdown on insurance companies. Hundreds of thousands more Ohioans will benefit as more provisions of the Affordable Care Act are phased in through 2014. Yet some lawmakers want to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Health Care reform is already:

- Making available tax credits to 127,000 Ohio small businesses.
- Providing peace of mind to the 2.4 million Ohioans who have a pre-existing condition and will be guaranteed that health insurance will be available to them.
- Ending lifetime insurance dollar caps.
- Making insurance available through the new High Risk Pool to over a thousand Ohioans who have been denied insurance coverage, with this number growing over time.
- Increasing access to preventive care by eliminating co-pays and deductibles in new policies and Medicare.
- Making insurance available for uninsured young adults by allowing parents to keep or enroll them in the family's insurance plan until age 26.
- Making medication more affordable for seniors on Medicare. **(continued on page 2)**



From the Director's Desk (cont'd from page 1)

implement this important law. We will be protecting our health and the health of generations that will follow. It took over 65 years to get to this point since President Truman proposed a system of national health coverage. We will protect our care!

The Affordable Care Act Has Been Good for Ohioans (cont'd from page 1)

In response to Attorney General Mike DeWine adding Ohio to the national lawsuit to overturn the law and the vote by Congress to repeal the Affordable Care Act, OCHC held a press conference to showcase how the law is already helping Ohioans. Read one Ohioans story on this page.

Real people helped by the ACA. The ACA has brought relief to people like Cathy Allen, Greg Burke, Reuben Bressler, and many more Ohioans. They have helped OCHC tell the story – through their stories – of the benefits of the ACA. Cathy and Greg are helped by the High Risk Pool that offers coverage to people with pre-existing conditions. Reuben Bressler is a young man who also was excluded from coverage because of a pre-existing condition; now, as a young adult under age 26, he is covered by his parents' health policy. Read Sue Willis' story in this newsletter of how the ACA changes to Medicare Part D are making her medications more affordable.

**Consumer Highlight:
Sue Willis, Columbus, OH**

Sue Willis is the owner and operator of AXIS Center for Public Awareness in Columbus, Ohio. Armed with a masters degree and partnering with a commercial photographer, she provides public relations, marketing, and graphics services, going back to 1976.

Sue was born with brittle bone disease and used crutches until about six years ago when she began using a wheelchair. Sue turned 65 in January 2010 and began receiving Medicare, with Part D paying for the modest prescriptions she needed.

Unfortunately, in the fall of 2010 Sue developed an antibiotic resistant bacterial infection. After three rounds of unsuccessful treatment with a lower cost drug, Sue's doctor prescribed a medication that cost Sue over \$1,000. She found herself in the "donut hole," the point at which Medicare Part D shifts the whole cost of the drug to the beneficiary.

When the infection returned on Christmas Eve, Sue's doctor renewed the prescription, and increased the dosage. Imagine her surprise when arriving at the pharmacy at 6 PM she learned she must pay \$1853 for the medication! She needed the medication, and did what others in her situation would do—she put it on her credit card, and now is paying off that bill with interest.

If the Affordable Care Act provision that went into effect in January 2011 had been in effect earlier, Sue would have been paying off about half that debt. As a homeowner with a disability, Sue has many extra expenses for services in her home, and for adaptive devices that make it possible for her to work. To remain independent and live in her own home, Sue must be able to manage her prescription drug costs. Without the Affordable Care Act, Sue cannot afford to get sick.

Acknowledgement of donors:

OCHC has been able to carry out its work throughout 2010 due to the generosity of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, the Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation and St. Luke's Foundation. We are grateful to our partners who have helped during the past year with special contributions including AARP, AFSCME Ohio Council 8, ProgressOhio, and the Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans.



First Anniversary of the Affordable Care Act

March 23, 2011!

**Our national partners have
designated the day by subgroups:**

Monday: Small Business;

Tuesday: Seniors;

Wednesday: Consumer Bill of Rights;

Thursday: Women;

Friday: Young Adults

Cleveland: Monday

**March 21 (Noon) – Anniversary
Celebration of Affordable Care Act
and its benefits to Seniors; Senior
Outreach Services; 2390 E. 79th St;
Cleveland, OH**

Toledo Area: Tuesday

**March 22 - 9:30a – 12:30p; Celebrating
the One Year Anniversary of the
Affordable Care Act; Local 50 hall,
7570 Caple Blvd (off Oregon) in
Northwood, OH**

Columbus: Wednesday

**March 23 - 10:00a; Press Conference;
Statehouse – Ladies Gallery; and
Release of Ohio Consumers for Health
Coverage's "Report to the
Community: the Implementation of the
Affordable Care Act in Ohio.", To be
released in Columbus and Cincinnati**

Cincinnati: Wednesday

**March 23 - 11:00a; Faith Based
Community Roundtable/Town Hall
Meeting ACA Anniversary; Carmel
Presbyterian Church 3549 Reading
Road, Cincinnati, OH**

Cleveland: Wednesday

**March 23 – 6:00 PM; Anniversary of the
ACA Evensong Service at Trinity
Episcopal Cathedral; 2230 Euclid;
Cleveland, OH**

For more info go to:

www.ohioconsumersforhealth.org

What OCHC Has Been Doing Since January 1st:

- Released a [press statement](#) following the Ohio Attorney General's joining of the Florida lawsuit.
- Held a [press conference](#) the day Congress voted to repeal the ACA.
- Met with representatives of the Kasich Administration Office of Health Transformation (OHT) and the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) to begin building a relationship to move the ACA and delivery system transformation forward.
- Filed [comments](#) on proposed federal regulations to establish minimum state standards for reviewing rate increase requests.
- Met with legislators to prepare for very tough budget discussions.
- Made presentations about the ACA in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo. We are also available to talk to your group. Call 614.456.0060 x 223 or email kameiner@uhcanohio.org to get more information.

April 6th – OCHC's Advocacy Day at the Statehouse.

Reserve your spot

<http://ohioconsumersforhealth.org/civcrm/event/info?reset=1&id=80>



**Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage
(OCHC) is staffed by UHCAN Ohio**

What's Coming Around the State:



Central Ohio:

- **March 10, March 24, April 7 (3:00 - 4:00 pm)**
Consumer Advocates across Ohio are invited to join the Ohio Campaign for Better Care for a **three-call Webinar series**. To join the calls, please RSVP to Julia Nielsen Bingman at jbngman@uhcanohio.org.
- **April 13 Ohio Council of Churches Advocacy Day 2-6pm, Trinity Episcopal Church** \$30/person; \$10/student. Contact Tom Smith 614.885.9590 x15 or tsmith@ohcouncilchs.org
- **April 19th, May 17, and June 21, 2011, 6:30-8:00 pm., Monthly Central Ohio Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage Gathering** UHCAN Ohio, 370 S. 5th Str., G3, Columbus Ohio 43215)

Northwest Ohio:

- **April 25, May 23, June 27, 2011 Monthly Meeting,** 4 pm, Collingwood Arts Center, 2413 Collingwood Blvd, Toledo, OH 43620

Northeast Ohio:

- **March 25 (9:30 AM)** – Monthly Meeting at Trinity Commons; 2230 Euclid; Cleveland
- **April 8 (8:30 AM)** – Senior Voice Town Hall on the ACA at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral; 2230 Euclid; Cleveland
- **April 8, May 13, and June 10, 2011 NEOCHC Monthly Meeting, at 9am, Trinity Episcopal Church,** 2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Southwest Ohio:

- **March 20, 2011** - Col Owens will appear on WLWT Channel 5 NBC Cincinnati ISSUES Program - ACA Anniversary Discussion.
- **April 12, May 10, June 14, 2011 SWOCHC Monthly Meetings,** 2:30 - 4:00 pm The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, 3805 Edwards Rd, Ste. 500 Cincinnati, OH

Address:

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