



Students registered voters and passed out information on the benefits of the health care law for young people.



Health Care Law Forum: Wendell Potter will be speaking in Bristol on October 16 & Kingsport, TN on October 17. See website for details.



We held a campus chapter training in Richmond for students from UMW, W&M, CNU and UVA.

News From the Grassroots

Governor McDonnell Puts Big Insurance Back in the Driver's Seat

Governor Bob McDonnell announced his 24-person Virginia Health Reform Initiative Advisory Council. The panel will be advising on implementation of the new health care law and will have considerable influence on the future of Virginia's health care system.

The problem is that there is not one health care consumer or consumer advocate on this panel. In fact, it is mostly made up of big business leaders, hospital CEOs and the CEO of Anthem, C. Burke King. For the last two years we fought—and won—the right to rein in the insurance companies. Now, Governor McDonnell is putting them right back in the driver seat without a single consumer to hold them accountable. Virginia Organizing is calling

attention to the absence of a consumer perspective on the panel.

The New Affordable Health Care Law, A Century in the Making

On September 16, Virginia Organizing held a forum on the new health care law in Norfolk with Joanne Grossi, Regional Director of Health and Human Services. Over 100 residents showed up to learn about the new health care law. "There is so much misinformation about the what the health care law will do. We held this forum so that the community will get real information about the bill and not distortions," said resident Winston Whitehurst.

The forum took place a week ahead of the major September 23 milestone when several key health care bill provisions went into effect that will benefit seniors, small

businesses, families with children and the nation as a whole. In celebration of September 23, Virginia Organizing student leaders held events at the College of William and Mary, University of Mary Washington, University of Virginia, University of Richmond and Tidewater Community College campuses.

Students gathered to celebrate the six-month milestone of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the provision that extends coverage for young adults. Students like Rachael Johnson, age 22, a senior at Virginia Tech will now be able to stay on their parents' health insurance plans until they are 26 years old. "Now, I will be going back on my parents' plan which will give me one less thing to worry about while pursuing my master's, and possibly my PhD, in clinical psychology," said Johnson.

Are you a state employee? Please support our work! Virginia Organizing is participating in the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (for state employees) and our number is 3168.

Real people. Real change.

The Young Invincibles Have Some New Armor

By: Dr. Chris Lillis

I have been a primary care doctor for some time now. I can still remember the early part of my career, when I was still adjusting to practice. I remember personally feeling helpless, or frightened, when trying my best to help a patient with a life threatening or mysterious problem.

Several months ago, a 24-year-old man walked into my office. He complained of blurry vision and felt lethargic. He felt thirsty all the time. He shared with me that in the past he was told he had diabetes, but he was laid off when his employer downsized in early 2009, and has been without his medicines and monitoring since. His diabetes was raging out of control like an unattended forest fire.

There it was again – that fear in my gut. I began to think of the cost of oral medicines, perhaps insulin, as well as the cost of regular blood tests to monitor the diabetes, the annual eye exam, and the daily test strips used in his glucose meter along with the lancing devices to prick his finger. Treating this young man's diabetes would be easy if he had health insurance.

Young adults disproportionately live without health insurance – the Urban Institute estimated in 2008 that 10 million adults did not have health insurance coverage. Many detractors of the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act will say that the “Young Invincibles” should have the choice to save a few bucks, and gamble with their health by not purchasing coverage. As a physician, I would say anyone offering the advice to go without health insurance should be charged with malpractice.

However, the “Young Invincible” is much like a unicorn – more myth than reality. Injuries requiring ER visits, obesity and related increases in diabetes, asthma, and even pregnancies all lead to crippling medical bills or a lack of basic care for this age group.

Thankfully, the health care law helps young adults now – by allowing them to stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26, and in the near future by providing insurance exchanges and subsidies to purchase affordable health insurance in 2014. We cannot, and should not, allow our young Americans to be at such risk for bankruptcy, disability and death simply due to a lack of access to care from being uninsured. So, in celebrating the six-month anniversary of the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, educate yourself by learning the facts about how the new law will help our Young Invincibles.

Dr. Chris Lillis is a member of the Virginia Organizing Health Care Committee.

***Originally posted on Progress Notes**
<http://drsforamerica.org/blog/>

Leader of the Month:

Jim Lindsay



Jim Lindsay helped found the Virginia Organizing Health Care Reform Committee in June of 2008. Jim decided to get involved because he had a couple loved

ones navigating the health care maze, one with insurance and one without. Struck by how illogical and unfair the health care system is, Jim decided to take action.

Jim has been involved with lobby visits, rallies, media interviews and has written countless letters to the editor. Jim remains active with the Health Care Reform Committee in calling for Governor Bob McDonnell to include a consumer perspective on the Virginia Health Reform Initiative Advisory Council. Virginia Organizing's Health Care Reform Committee has been speaking out on the lack of consumer representation through legislative meetings and media outreach. They will also be attending several public comment sessions over the next several months at council working group meetings. Jim will continue fighting for implementation in Virginia, even as the Governor and Attorney General attempt to block health care reform.

“The bottom line is that the current health insurance system is dysfunctional and fixing it is the most critical issue we face today. Through all of the politics and heated debate, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that people really do suffer grave consequences as a result of inaction. People literally are dying for health care,” said Lindsay.

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Local Chapters (call or visit the website for more information)

Charlottesville

Danville

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Fredericksburg

Northern Virginia

Newport News/Hampton Roads

South Hampton Roads

Williamsburg

Shenandoah Valley

Washington County & Lee County

Petersburg

Richmond

On Campus: W&M, UMW, VSU, CNU, UVA, E&H, U of R

News in Brief

- Residents held a forum on the dangers posed to the community by CSX rail cars containing toxic chemicals parked in Fredericksburg. Dr. Fred Millar, a specialist in railroad hazmat transportation, was the featured presenter. Residents expressed their concerns. “We have been told that CSX has an excellent safety record. That is great, however, until recently BP had an excellent safety record as well. The possibility of an accident is real and we cannot take chances with the health and safety of our community,” said Charlotte Jones.
- Virginia Organizing held public “budget seesaw” demonstrations in Danville, Fredericksburg and Martinsville this month. Community members used a seesaw to demonstrate that when cuts are made to education or other vital services, the whole state gets out of balance. “The real long-term solution to our budget crisis lies in a balanced approach that includes revenue and fixes our broken, old tax system. A cuts only approach is reckless,” said Alane Callander of the Balance Virginia Budget and Revenue Committee.
- Virginia Organizing's 7th Annual Social Justice Bowl is Friday, October 22 at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, 6:00-8:00 p.m.