

**September 15, 2009**

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING HR 676 – Single Payer Universal Health Care**

Workers, their families and their unions are waging an increasingly difficult struggle to win or to keep good health care coverage. Almost every union at every contract deadline must battle and sacrifice merely to sustain health care benefits. The rising costs of health insurance are blocking workers' progress in wages and other areas. All of our unions face a healthcare crisis.

But the crisis extends far beyond union members. More than 50 million people in the U. S. are currently without health insurance, more than 75 million went without for some length of time within the last two years, and millions more have inadequate coverage or are at risk of losing coverage. People of color, immigrants and women are denied care at disproportionate rates, while the elderly and many others must choose between necessities and life sustaining drugs and care. Unorganized workers have either no or inadequate coverage. The Institute of Medicine has found that each year more than 18,000 in the U. S. die because they had no health insurance.

While we in the United States spend approximately twice as much of our gross domestic product as other developed nations on health care, we remain the only industrialized country without universal coverage. Our problem worsens each year as insurance costs increase and as gradual solutions have failed to make a dent in the problem.

The U. S. health system continues to treat health care as a commodity distributed according to the ability to pay, rather than as a social service to be distributed according to human need. Insurance companies and HMOs compete not by increasing quality or lowering costs, but by avoiding covering those whose needs are greatest.

Economic necessity and moral conscience compel us to seek a better way. Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI) (joined by 93 co-signers) has introduced HR 676, the United States National Health Insurance Act, also called Expanded and Improved Medicare for All. This single-payer health care program proposes an effective mechanism for controlling skyrocketing health costs while covering all 50 million uninsured Americans. The bill also restores free choice of physicians to patients and provides comprehensive prescription drug coverage to seniors, as well as to younger people.

HR 676 would cover every person in the U. S. for all necessary medical care including prescription drugs, hospital, surgical, outpatient services, primary and preventive care, emergency services, dental, mental health, home health, physical therapy, rehabilitation (including for substance abuse), vision care, chiropractic and long term care. HR 676 ends deductibles and co-payments. HR 676 would save billions annually by eliminating high overhead and profits of the private health insurance industry and HMOs. The transition to national health insurance would apply the savings from administration and profits to expanded and improved coverage for all.

A single payer program as provided by HR 676 is the only affordable option for universal, comprehensive coverage.

**Be it resolved:**

That Local 728 of the I.A.T.S.E. endorses Congressman Conyers' bill HR 676, "Expanded and Improved Medicare for All," a single payer health care program.

That Local 728 of the I.A.T.S.E will work with other unions and community groups to build a groundswell of popular support and action for single payer universal health care and HR 676 until we make what is morally right for our nation into what is also politically possible.

That Local 728 of the I.A.T.S.E will send a copy of this resolution to Unions for HR676 to forward to Congressman Conyers, to all members of the U.S. House and Senate, to the AFL-CIO Executive Council, and to the news media.

That Local 728 of the I.A.T.S.E will take other actions to mobilize our members and our community at the grassroots to encourage other members of the House to sign on as co-sponsors of HR 676 and to encourage Senators to introduce a companion bill in the Senate.

The Executive Board of I.A.T.S.E. Local 728

The Membership of IATSE Local 728

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