

USW's Lynn Williams on Single Payer

Lynn Williams is a past International President of the United Steelworkers (USW) and current president of SOAR, the Steelworkers' retiree organization. This is what he wrote about Canada's single payer healthcare in a recent article entitled "Rebuilding the Labor Movement" (1/31/08). www.huffingtonpost.com/lynn-r-williams/rebuilding-the-labor-move_b_84295.html

"... Certainly the right to health care would be part of any civilized definition of freedom from want or economic security.

"My own experience with the evolution and provision of health care may prove instructive, as I was in Canada during the time the national program developed there.

"It works marvelously well from the experience of my family. My mother lived in a nursing home for the last 10 years of her life, and it cost only the difference between a double room and her single. Three of my four children and their families live under it, and it has been just fine (the fourth lives out of the country). I have been living under it again since returning to Canada after my retirement as president of the Steelworkers and have yet to pay a cent for a covered service, which is virtually everything.

"It is truly universal. It is paid for out of tax revenue. As a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it is much less expensive than the world's highest percentage of GDP spent on health care in the United States. The US spends \$6,102 per person as compared to Canada's \$3,165. Yet, the results are measurably better in Canada, where there is greater longevity and lower infant mortality

"Every advanced country in the world, with the exception only of the U.S., has some version of a public health insurance plan. None is perfect, but what system is? Virtually all have better statistics than the U.S., are less costly, and provide care to everyone."

HR.676 would institute a single payer health care system in the U.S. by expanding a greatly improved Medicare system to every resident. 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 copayments. HR.676 would save billions annually by eliminating the high overhead and profits of the private health insurance industry and HMOs. HR.676 currently has 88 co-sponsors in addition to Conyers. Co-sponsors and bill text are here: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.00676>:

HR.676 has been endorsed by 367 union organizations in 48 states including 95 Central Labor Councils and Area Labor Federations and 32 state AFL-CIOs (KY, PA, CT, OH, DE, ND, WA, SC, WY, VT, FL, WI, WV, SD, NC, MO, MN, ME, AR, MD-DC, TX, IA, AZ, TN, OR, GA, OK, KS, CO, IN, AL & CA).

For further information, a list of union endorsers, or a sample endorsement resolution, contact:

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Save the date!

Monday, April 28
1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Gardner Auditorium, State House, Boston

Free showing of SiCKO, specifically for legislators and staff, but everyone welcome. Whether or not you've already seen this Michael Moore exposé of the US healthcare system you will be moved and enthralled by this showing. Personal appearance by Donna Smith, whose plight, from medical bankruptcy to family dislocation, is related in this film. Sponsored by Mass-Care and the Health Care Action Committee of Massachusetts Jobs with Justice.

More co-sponsors for HR.676

Since we last reported on the growing Congressional support for John Conyers' Medicare for All bill, HR.676, Rep. Michael Capuano (D-Somerville) has joined the ranks of his fellow Massachusetts Reps. William Delahunt, Barney Frank, Stephen Lynch, James McGovern, John Olver and John Tierney in co-sponsoring HR.676.

To find out more about HR.676 and the SiCKO-Cure Road Show, contact Healthcare-NOW! , 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012-2725. 800-453-1305. www.healthcare-now.org

SiCKO on DVD

By the way, Michael Moore's acclaimed healthcare documentary is now out in DVD. Contact Mass-Care for information on holding house parties to discuss this hot material or to arrange for a speaker:

Mass-Care, 33 Harrison Avenue, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02111, 617-723-7001 or 800-383-1973, www.masscare.org. ■

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