

HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA NOW!

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Contact: Ali Vander Zanden
ali@mainepeoplesalliance.org
Cell: (207) 590-2299

Mainers Cry “Mayday!” to Senators

Biddeford - Hundreds of Mainers are visiting Senator Snowe’s and Collins’ offices in Biddeford, Portland, Auburn, Lewiston, Augusta and Bangor today emphasize the urgent need for federal action to guarantee access to quality, affordable health care for all.

A “Health Care Caravan” of twenty-five volunteers is making six stops throughout the state, meeting up with groups of local residents in every city. A separate delegation is also visiting Senator Snowe’s office in Presque Isle. At each office, activists are presenting the Senators with a lighthouse, sharing personal health care stories, and asking the senators to be guiding lights out of the health care crisis by supporting a public health insurance plan for everyone in America.

“The fact that so many people are taking time out of their days to get this message to the Senators shows how serious Mainers are about federal reform,” said Billy DiGuilio of Bowdoin, who is taking a break from work to participate in the Portland rally. “I believe 2009 will be the year that we ensure everyone in America has access to quality, affordable health care. We just can’t wait any longer.”

Confirmed participants who pledged to show up at each office number over fifty, with the largest gathering in Portland expected to be more than a hundred strong.

Paulette Dingley will be visiting Senator Collins’ office in Lewiston today and plans to share her story of struggling to survive breast cancer. The high cost of individual health insurance has kept her uninsured for more than three years.

“I really appreciate the leadership role that both Senators have taken on health care issues in the past,” said Dingley. “What concerns me now is whether they will be there when we need them most. In the next few weeks, all eyes will be on Maine and our Senators. In this crucial moment, it would be outrageous to just say “no” to reform. This is a time to take bold action.”

Maine People’s Alliance Healthcare Organizer Ali Vander Zanden is helping to coordinate the events.

“Hundreds of Mainers are coming out today because we are hopeful that 2009 will be the year that Mainers’ cries of distress about our health care crisis are finally heeded,” said Vander Zanden. “Maine’s Senators can be our guiding light out of this crisis. The question is, will federal health care reform just tinker around the edges of the health care crisis, or will it actually solve the problem?”

The overriding theme of the events all over the state was the necessity of a public option for health care at the federal level.

“To solve this problem, we are going to need, at the bare minimum, a strong public health insurance plan for everyone in America so that we’re not at the mercy of profit-driven insurance companies,” said Vander Zanden.

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In July, the Health Care for America Now (HCAN) campaign was launched in 45 states across the country, announcing an unprecedented nation-wide push for affordable, quality healthcare for all. The main goal of the coalition’s substantial grassroots efforts is to pressure the Congress and President to pass health care reform in 2009 that meets the group’s [principles](#). In Maine, HCAN is lead by the Maine People’s Alliance, MSEA-SEIU, Kennebec Valley Organization, Maine Equal Justice Partners, Maine Center for Economic Policy, AFSCME, Maine Women’s Lobby, Centro Latino, Tengo Voz, Maine Education Association, Engage Maine, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Equality Maine, and the MoveOn.org Portland Council. Read more at: http://healthcareforamericanow.org/site/content/about_us/