

***Southern Health Partners:
Building a Movement for
Health Justice in the U.S. South***



**Healthcare Georgia Foundation
Connections 2010
Leadership in Difficult Economic Times:
Connecting Resources and People**

**April 1, 2010
Community Catalyst**

Today's Presentation

- Who is Community Catalyst?
- Why advocate for health in the South?
- Overview of southern health advocacy
- Elements of successful advocacy
- How advocates can get involved



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Community Catalyst is a national nonprofit advocacy organization working to build a health justice movement. We are innovators who look for breakthrough opportunities to improve health care for all Americans. We develop new approaches to strengthen the voices of consumers and communities, organize vulnerable constituencies, and build the kinds of organizations and coalitions that can advocate effectively for health care reforms.

Community Catalyst staff members are experts in health policy, organizational development, community organizing, law, communications, and strategic planning. They provide advice, information, and tools that help communities, consumer groups, providers, foundations and policymakers work together to lead health system change.

Implementing National Health Reform – The Work Continues



- ✓ Building public support and implementing early reforms
- ✓ Defending existing programs and current levels of coverage
- ✓ Developing policy and regulations at the national and state levels
- ✓ Enrolling people in new programs and monitoring the impact of reform
- ✓ Ensuring sustainability through health care delivery system reforms

Serious & Growing Health Problems in the South



- ✓ Health care quality lowest of any U.S. region
- ✓ Costs higher, with poorer outcomes
- ✓ Four of the five states in the U.S. with lowest insurance rates are in the South (LA, MS, FL, TX)
- ✓ Severe racial and ethnic disparities: access, quality and health status
- ✓ High levels of medical debt
- ✓ Injurious workforce, economic development and political impacts

Southern Health Partners



- ✓ Organized health justice advocacy networks in 11 states
- ✓ A regional infrastructure for strategic collaboration
- ✓ Health care as a galvanizing set of issues for community engagement and advocacy capacity-building

11 Southeastern States



Alabama
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
North
Carolina
South
Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Virginia

Georgia System of Health Advocacy: Key Members

- ✓ Budget & Policy Analysis (GBPI)
- ✓ Consumer Education and Engagement (GHF)
- ✓ Hospital Accountability (Georgia Watch)

Southern Health Partners: Two-Year Policy Impacts



- ✓ Prevented or moderated cuts in state Medicaid and children's health coverage programs
- ✓ Expanded eligibility, reduced enrollment barriers for children's health programs
- ✓ Increased state revenues
- ✓ New requirements for hospitals to implement and publicize charity care policies in process
- ✓ Coverage expansions, affordability provisions, delivery system reforms included in federal Health Reform Legislation

What leads to effective health advocacy?



- ✓ Legal and policy analysis
- ✓ Grassroots leadership and public participation
- ✓ Communications and media outreach
- ✓ Strategic alliances with other stakeholders
- ✓ Salient and effective issue campaigns – common goals, activities, partners
- ✓ Resources to support infrastructure and activities

What advocates (you) can do!



Build Public Support

- Educate and Mobilize your members and other grassroots organizations
- Develop broad-based coalitions of advocates and other stakeholders in support of reform
- Identify, engage and share stories of those who benefit from reform

Defend Existing Programs

- Identify cost-saving measures in Medicaid and other public programs
- Identify new sources of revenue for Medicaid and other public programs
- Build coalitions around broader state revenue solutions
- Defend and strengthen state and local safety-net programs for consumers who remain uninsured or underinsured

What advocates (you) can do!



Enrolling People in New Programs and Monitoring the Impact of Reform

- Conduct outreach and enrollment initiatives
- Document the impact of provisions on consumers
- Work with government officials and other stakeholders to respond to identified problems

Supporting the Development of Effective Policy and Regulations

- Advocate for transparency in the decision-making processes
- Advocate for consumer-friendly rules and regulations
- Identify consumers with relevant personal stories to testify before lawmakers and speak with the media

What advocates (you) can do!

Ensuring Sustainability through Health Care Delivery System Reforms

- Develop policy and advocacy agendas based on the demonstrated effectiveness of new care models
- Build grassroots support for delivery system reform
- Build networks and coalitions for delivery system reform and collaborate on pilot and demonstration programs

Your Involvement: Why it matters

- ✓ Strengthened system of advocacy
- ✓ Educated community and decision-makers
- ✓ Strengthened consumer voice
- ✓ Improved quality of life

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