

Health Care Report

On October 6, there will be a Health Rally at Maple and Railroad organized by the single payer group in Bellingham, United for National Health Care . I am on the political sub-committee and beginning to lobby for support from the League (name or a speaker at the rally) and support from the Whatcom democrats. This action is a follow up to the leafleting at all the performances of Michael Moores's film, "Sicko," which played at Sehome for two weeks. I've contacted Chris Lindberg, local UNHC coordinator for more info on the rally. I just received a draft of the rally flyer yesterday.

Nationally, the two SCHIP bills being considered by Congress will be on the table again for a joint approach when the session reconvenes. The Senate bill is "clean" according to in Patty Murray's local office and addresses only SCHIP. The house version combines SCHIP with other issues. SCHIP began under Nixon, I believe and covers some low income children. It is being looked at as a test for Congress to edge toward universal health care coverage starting with increased funding for uninsured low income kids. Bush has vowed to veto whatever hits his desk regarding SCHIP as it represents a step toward universal health care, socialized medicine, you can fill in the blanks. Whatever the amount of \$ allocated to SCIP, millions of kids will remain uninsured.

Also of interest, Physicians for a National Health Care Program and the National Nurses Organizing Committee joined to launch a minute ad during the last Democratic debate in Des Moines on Aug.19. It was a challenge to all the leading dems to show "real leadership" on health care which doesn't mean just being better than Republicans."

The US Census Bureau released data last week showing that the number of uninsured Americans increased by 2.2 million. Sadly this group represents the middle class (2.07 million) earning over 50K per year. "Middle income Americans are now experiencing the human suffering that comes with being uninsured. It makes any illness a potential economic and social catastrophe," said Dr. Steffie Woolhandler, co-founder of Physicians for a National Health Program and Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

WOW! What a lot of work to be done. Cheers, JoAnne Pullen