

## Nurses' guide to single-payer reform

### Hearing and Lobby Day on Oct. 8 for the Massachusetts Health Care Trust

The time has come for you to show your support for S.686 and single-payer health care in Massachusetts. A legislative public hearing will be at 10 a.m., Oct. 8 in Gardner Auditorium at the Statehouse.

Please attend the hearing in Boston and help lobby our legislators.

Bus transportation can be arranged through MASS-CARE. Call Julia for more information or to RSVP: 617-723-7001 or 800-383-1973.

#### What the Massachusetts Health Care Trust does

This legislation guarantees that every Massachusetts resident has first class health care coverage by replacing the current patchwork of public and private health care plans with a uniform and comprehensive health plan. It creates a single public entity called the Health Care Trust to replace all the present public and private bureaucracies. The trust, appointed by the governor, will have representation from consumers, professionals and government. It will:

1. Oversees the delivery of health care services to Massachusetts's residents, with emphasis on universality, rational and effective allocation of resources, preventive medicine and the need for health care choices to be made by provider and patient.
2. Collect and disburse funds for the purpose of providing comprehensive health care for all residents of the commonwealth. These funds will derive from current state and federal expenditures for medical care, additional public and private sources to be proposed by the Trust following completion of a study undertaken by the Legislature and sales taxes on products that tend to increase health costs.
3. Negotiate or set fair and reasonable methods and rates of compensation with providers of medical services and with health care facilities and approve capital expenditures in excess of \$500,000.

#### Why we need this bill

Massachusetts spends more on health care than any other state in the U.S., yet over a million of its residents have no health insurance or are underinsured! We already spend enough on health care in the commonwealth to provide quality care for all of our residents. Under this bill, money that currently goes to administrative costs such as paperwork, marketing and profits would be spent on providing care. In 1987 we had 368,000 uninsured in Massachusetts; in 1997 that figure stood at 755,000. The number of uninsured has more than doubled since then despite the fact that we added over 140,000 to the public rolls.

We currently pay for health care many times over. As taxpayers, we pay for the public programs that make up almost half of direct health care spending. We pay for tax subsidies for employers who offer health insurance, whether our own employer offers coverage or not. As individuals, if we get employer-based coverage, we pay our share

of the premium, and, on average, earn about 20 percent less than we would otherwise to cover the employer's share. Then we pay cash out of pocket for co-pays and deductibles. Businesses and individuals who buy liability insurance (auto, homeowners, product) pay for health care coverage for the people hurt, regardless of whether those people already have coverage—and only insurance companies benefit from this duplicative arrangement.

By replacing private dollars with public ones and making funding of health care more equitable, most individuals and Mas-

- Attend the Oct. 8 hearing on S.686
- Give S.686 a favorable committee report so that it progresses through the legislative process.

#### Health Care Committee members

Sen. Richard Moore, Uxbridge, Senate chair; Sen. Jarrett Barrios, Cambridge, Senate vice chair and co-sponsor, S.686; Sen. Harriet Chandler, Worcester; Sen. Susan Fargo, Lincoln, co-sponsor, S.686; Sen. Susan Tucker, Andover; Sen. Bruce Tarr, Gloucester.

Rep. Peter Koutoujian, Newton: House chair; Rep. Christine Canavan, Brockton,

Robert Havern, D-Arlington; Brian Joyce, D-Milton; David Magnani, D-Framingham; Thomas McGee, D-Lynn; Joan Menard, D-Somerset; Andrea Nuciforo, D-Pittsfield; Robert O'Leary, D-Cape and Islands; Marc Pacheco, D-Taunton; Pamela Resor, D-Acton; Stan Rosenberg, D-Northampton; Charles Shannon, D-Winchester; Dianne Wilkerson, D-Boston.

#### House co-sponsors and supporters

Ruth Balser, D-Newton; Deborah Blumer, D-Framingham; Mark Carron, D-Southbridge; Edward Connolly, D-Everett; Robert Correia, D-Fall River; Michael Costello, D-Newburyport; Paul Demakis, D-Back Bay; Paul Donato, D-Medford; Christopher Donelan, D-Orange; Carol Donovan, D-Woburn; James Eldridge, D-Acton; Christopher Fallon, D-Malden; Mark Falzone, D-Saugus; Michael Festa, D-Melrose; Gloria Fox, D-Roxbury; Patricia Haddad, D-Somerset; Patricia Jehlen, D-Somerville; Louis Kafka, D-Sharon; Rachel Kaprielian, D-Watertown; Jay Kaufman, D-Lexington; Kay Khan, D-Newton; Peter Kocot, D-Northampton; Stephen Kulik, D-Turners Falls; Elizabeth Malia, D-Jamaica Plain; Jim Marzilli, D-Arlington; James Miceli, D-Wilmington; Shirley Owens-Hicks, D-Roxbury; Matthew Patrick, D-Falmouth; Anne Paulsen, D-Belmont; Douglas Petersen, D-Marblehead; Cheryl Rivera, D-Springfield; Byron Rushing, D-South End; Frank Smizik, D-Brookline; Joyce Spiliotis, D-Peabody; Karen Spilka, D-Ashland; Ellen Story, D-Amherst; David Sullivan, D-Fall River; Benjamin Swan, D-Springfield; Kathleen Teahan, D-Whitman; Timothy Toomey, D-Cambridge; Anthony Verga, D-Gloucester; Martin Walsh, D-Dorchester; Steven Walsh, D-Lynn; Alice Wolf, D-Cambridge.

If your legislator is not on the list, call and tell them that you expect them to sign on as a co-sponsor or supporter.

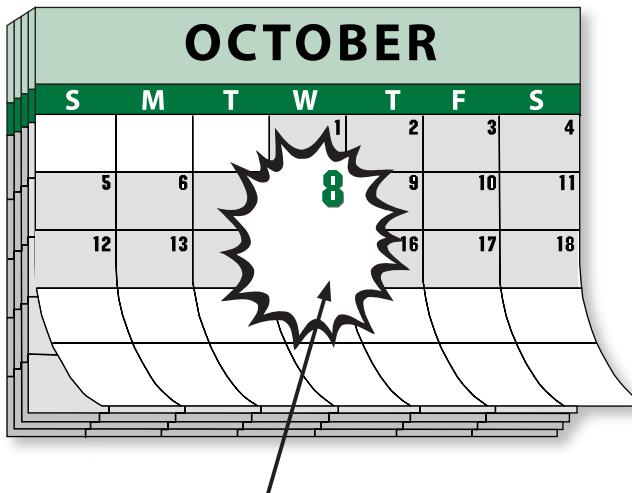
To locate your legislator, visit the Web site [www.state.ma.us/legis/citytown.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/legis/citytown.htm).

#### Supporters of S.686

Massachusetts's voters have consistently supported a universal, single-payer health care system like the one that will be created by this bill. A 1986 referendum directing the Legislature to call on the U.S. Congress to enact a national health care program was approved by more than 66 percent of the voters statewide. A subsequent single-payer referendum in 1994 was approved by over half of the voters in eight districts. In 1998, voters in three legislative districts overwhelmingly approved a referendum question calling for a single payer health care system. Another local referendum was overwhelmingly approved in 1999 and three in 2000.

A long list of organizations and groups support a single-payer health care system, including: the Mass Public Health Association; Mass Senior Action Council; United Auto Workers CAP Council; League of Women Voters; Unitarian Universalists; Latino Health Institute; and Massachusetts Nurses Association. MASS-CARE is the umbrella organization whose purpose is to develop and build grass roots support for such a system. ■

### Universal single payer health care



#### Mark your calendar

Public hearing and Lobby Day

10 a.m.

Massachusetts Statehouse, Gardner Auditorium

sachusetts businesses would, on average, pay no more than they do now for health care. Coordinating funding through a single payer (Health Care Trust) will save enough in administrative costs to pay for the health care needs of all Massachusetts residents. Over time, savings from planning and positive changes in service delivery could also save.

Unlike our present health care system, the system created by this bill allows patients real choice. They can pick their provider or elect to enroll in HMOs. Care decisions will be made by patient and provider together with the goal of maximizing health rather than by insurance companies trying to maximize profits. Peer review, utilization review and capital spending approval requirements will prevent inappropriate uses of resources.

If your senator and/or representative is a member of the Health Care Committee, you have a special role to play as a constituent. Please contact members of the Health Care Committee urging them to:

House vice chair; Rep. William Galvin, Canton; Rep. Colleen Garry, Dracut; Rep. Thomas A. Golden Jr., Lowell; Rep. Rachel Kaprielian, Watertown, co-sponsor, S.686; Rep. Kathleen Teahan, Whitman, co-sponsor, S.686; Rep. Patricia Haddad, Somerset, co-sponsor, S.686; Rep. Robert Coughlin, Dedham; Rep. Shirley Gomes, Harwich; Rep. Susan Gifford, Wareham.

If your legislators are listed below as co-sponsors of S.686, ask them to testify on Oct. 8. If your legislators are not listed, please be sure to contact them and explain why you, as a nurse, support S.686 and ask them for their support on Oct. 8.

#### Legislative lead sponsors

Senate: Steve Tolman, D-Brighton  
House: Frank Hynes, D-Marshfield

#### Senate co-sponsors and supporters

Jarrett Barrios, D-Cambridge; Cynthia Creem, D-Newton; Susan Fargo, D-Lincoln;