



RELEASE: Healthcare Is a Human Right campaign responds to Shumlin's failure to act on universal healthcare

DECEMBER 17, 2014

For Immediate Release: December 17 2014

Contact: Keith Brunner, 802.363.9615, keith@workerscenter.org

Healthcare Is a Human Right campaign responds to Shumlin's failure to act on universal healthcare

Today the Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaign released the following statement in response to Governor Shumlin's failure to move forward with universal, publicly financed healthcare in Vermont. Tomorrow, Healthcare Is a Human Right supporters will be at the Vermont statehouse at 12pm for a rally and creative photo opportunity denouncing the Governor's failure to act.

Statement by the Healthcare Is a Human Right Campaign:

"The Healthcare Is a Human Right (HCHR) Campaign expresses its deep disappointment in the failure of Governor Shumlin to act on the will of the people of Vermont to ensure universal, publicly financed healthcare in our state. This inaction is a slap in the face of many thousands of Vermont residents who suffer from poor health and financial hardship in the private insurance market that sells healthcare as a commodity to those who can afford it. The HCHR Campaign reminds the Governor that healthcare is a human right, and that our government has an obligation to ensure that right. Our government also has a responsibility to enact state law, and Act 48, passed in 2011, clearly requires Vermont to take actions to provide healthcare as a public good to all residents by 2017.

We all currently pay for our hodgepodge healthcare system - we just don't pay in a way that leads to giving people access to care. Moving to a different financing mechanism has nothing to do with raising new money. Vermont's businesses currently pay 80% of all private insurance premiums. Most of these businesses are large employers; they pay the lion share of health insurance. Individuals who fall sick also pay a big chunk - through roughly \$800 million in out-of-pocket costs. The Governor's task at hand was to shift private payments to a more equitable, public financing mechanism. His task was not to find new money.

The HCHR Campaign does not believe that the Governor showed sufficient commitment to identifying alternative public financing mechanisms for a service that is already being paid for by all of us. Over

the past three years the Administration developed its financing ideas - the same ideas the Governor now claims make public financing impossible - behind closed doors, without public participation or broader input from the many experts in universal healthcare financing, but in close consultation with a select group of businesses. The Governor missed the deadline set by Act 48 to submit a financing plan in early 2013, thus failing to meet its obligations under the law. The proposals the Governor has presented now are not based on the principle of equity. By shielding big businesses from continuing their payments for healthcare at the current level, the governor made his financing plan both inequitable and unviable. An equitable financing plan would have shown a clear path to sufficient and sustainable funding by maintaining big businesses current payments for healthcare costs and thus avoiding a cost-shift to small businesses and individuals.

The Governor's misguided decision was a completely unnecessary result of a failed policy calculation that he pursued without democratic input. Without formally repealing Act 48 and without a democratic process of deliberation, the Governor's unilateral decision is completely inexcusable and unacceptable. A decision of this magnitude requires the voices of the people of Vermont to be heard.

The many thousands of people that are active in the HCHR Campaign will not acquiesce to this undemocratic decision. The people of Vermont do not have the time to wait on a Governor who has consistently broken his promises. The HCHR Campaign will keep on fighting for our right to healthcare, and we call on our legislators to join us in this fight and move forward with an equitable, public financing plan for universal healthcare in our state."

###

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1] Click here for the Healthcare is a Human Right Campaign's proposal to finance GMC: <http://www.workerscenter.org/sites/default/files/gmcfinancingplan-vwcproposalfinal.pdf>
(<http://www.workerscenter.org/sites/default/files/gmcfinancingplan-vwcproposalfinal.pdf>)



©2003-2012 Vermont Workers' Center • 294 N Winooski Avenue, Burlington VT 05401 • (802) 861 4892
Vermont website by Webskillet | a union shop and worker-owned cooperative