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Improved
Medicare
For
All!**

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Come Join Us!

**We are preparing a One-day Statewide Conference to
begin a National Organization for the**

Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act-HR676

**On Saturday, May 12, 2012, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
United Food & Commercial Workers Union
876 Horace Brown Drive, Madison Heights, MI 48071**

Guest Speakers

**Dr Margaret Flowers of PNHP, Sister Mary Ellen
Howard & Congressman John Conyers, Jr.**

Kay Tillow of Kentucky- Moderator

Continental Breakfast and Light Lunch served!

**Get Involved! Check us out at FaceBook at HR676MIMA and
contact us at hr676mima@aol.com or call 313 468-4950**

**Our goal is to organize statewide 10,000 strong in Michigan
to March on Washington with all other states**

Tickets \$5 (\$10 at the door) donation-nobody turned away

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.
Working for Quality, Affordable Health Care

For more than three decades, Congressman Conyers has led efforts in Congress to reform the health care system. He is the founder of the 45 member Congressional Universal Health Care Task Force. The caucus introduced H. Con. Res 99, which was supported by over 450 grassroots organizations across the country and dozens of Members of Congress. He recently reintroduced H.R. 676, the "The Expanded and Improved Medicare For All Act," a single-payer health insurance bill which has the endorsement of over 4,000 physicians nationally. This legislation would guarantee every American access to affordable, comprehensive, quality health care.

Congressman Conyers has authored the Resident Physician Safety Protection Act in order to reduce the hours that resident physicians work so they can perform their work safely. Congressman Conyers' advocacy directly led to a decision by the American Medical Association and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education to adopt major provisions of the bill.

In the 111th Congress, Congressman Conyers introduced H.R. 2381, the "Nurse and Healthcare Worker Protection Act." This legislation would require the Secretary of Labor to promulgate a rule creating a standard for safe patient handling and injury prevention to prevent musculoskeletal disorders for health care workers handling patients in health care facilities. Under this standard, health facilities would have to purchase an adequate number of mechanical lifting devices for their employees to transport and lift patients.

In the 112th Congress, Congressman Conyers has introduced H.R. 894, the "Maternal Mortality Accountability Act." This legislation would create a national reporting standard and provide resources to the states to encourage the accurate tracking of maternal deaths. H.R. 894 has been endorsed by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), Amnesty International, and the American Medical Student Association (AMSA).

Sister Mary Ellen Howard
By Joyce Kelly
Thursday
July 15, 2004

Sister Mary Ellen Howard has a passion for making a difference in people's lives. It's been the hallmark of her more than 20 years in health care. A self-described "stubborn Irish woman," Howard has most recently dedicated her faith and faculties to ensuring that Detroit's St. Francis Cabrini Clinic, the oldest standing free clinic in the country, remains viable. It's been quite a journey to this point for Howard, who started her career as a nurse, then navigated her way through executive positions at several Michigan Catholic hospitals. She left the executive suite after having to lay off friends because of

budget cuts. "That was very tough," she recalls. Following a sabbatical, Howard came back more committed to health care than ever before.

How it all started

I was an education major but worked weekends at Mt. Carmel Hospital and I got hooked on hospitals. I loved the people, the atmosphere, the life-and-death situations. Those are sacred moments in families' lives and it is a wonderful opportunity to be able to share that.

Career highlights

Establishing Riverside Domestic Violence Shelter 20 years ago when the community lacked such a facility and also creating Jordan Health Center, which is a school-based health center in Detroit. [These programs] are making a big difference in the lives of the kids and the families in their poor neighborhoods.

As we speak

At Cabrini Clinic, I'm using my nursing and administrative skills to provide health care to people who would not otherwise have access. There are 270,000 uninsured people in Detroit. We do some good, but more needs to be done. We basically put Band-Aids on bullet wounds.

You can contact Sister Mary Ellen at brinclinic@sbcglobal.net

Kay Tillow: Civil Rights, Union Organizing Mark Decades of Activism
01/01/2011
Berry Craig

Kay Tillow, a veteran union activist from Louisville, can inspire us all as we start the New Year. "Set a stout heart to a steep hillside" is an old Scottish proverb that reminds me of Tillow, who's executive director of the Nurses Professional Organization. She and the NPO have spent 21 years battling to organize nurses who work for Louisville-based Norton Healthcare, Kentucky's largest health care system. Says Tillow:

"The [National Labor Relations Board] has ruled in our favor time and again. But management has continued to threaten and intimidate nurses who want the union and we've never gotten recognition."

Even so, Tillow refuses to give up. "This is a human rights issue to me."

Bill Londrigan, Kentucky State AFL-CIO president, is one of Tillow's biggest fans.

"Kay has worked tirelessly on behalf of nurses who have had to fight one of the most anti-union health care corporations in the nation. She's a warrior for workers. "

Well past retirement age, Tillow has been a union organizer for going on 40 years.

"I can't imagine living if I weren't doing something to change things that are wrong."

Born in Paducah, Ky., and reared in nearby Metropolis, Ill., she started helping right wrongs when she was a student at the University of Illinois. In 1963, Tillow took time out from classes to join the fight for equal rights for African Americans. She traveled south and signed up with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

"Those were interesting times. The year before, I studied in Ghana where I met W.E.B. Du Bois. I confess I didn't know he was an American who had helped found the NAACP."

Tillow had joined the NAACP at her alma mater. "The civil rights movement was just starting, the freedom riders. It inspired a lot of us."

The Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacists terrorized, beat up and even murdered civil rights volunteers like Tillow.

"Was I afraid? How could you be afraid when everybody else around you was so courageous? They were willing to sacrifice everything, including their lives."

She fell in love and married Walter Tillow, another civil rights worker. The couple ultimately became union activists.

"A lot of the injustice African Americans were suffering was economic injustice. Unions have always fought economic injustice. So it made sense for us to work within the union movement."

The Tillows became organizers for the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) and Local 1199 of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees. They won some organizing drives, and lost others. "But we never quit."

Although she's not a nurse, Tillow joined the NPO when it was affiliated with the Machinists (IAM). The National Nurses United (NNU) is NPO's current affiliation. She also represents the NPO on the All Unions Committee for Single Payer Health Care, for which she is still campaigning. As she puts it: "Jesus healed and he did it for free."

Tillow helped organize an IAM local at Lourdes Hospital in Paducah, though hospital management ultimately broke the union. While the Lourdes union was short-lived, that organizing drive is special to Tillow.

"Lourdes used to be old Riverside Hospital—the hospital where I was born."

Dr. Margaret Flowers Biography
Pediatrician, Activist for Universal Health Care. b. 1962
Americans Who Tell the Truth

"The phrase that continuously runs through my mind is 'To be silent is to be complicit.' I cannot be complicit in the face of a healthcare industry that profits at the cost of human lives and in the face of an administration and a Congress that are too dysfunctional to stop this practice."

Imagine choosing pediatrics as a profession to "give children a great start, a healthy start...", then leaving the profession because you were no longer allowed to give children the care they needed because of health insurance restrictions. For healthcare reform activist Dr. Margaret Flowers, that choice became reality several years ago as she felt forced to leave the "art" of medicine, as she calls it, to become a strong advocate for a single-payer insurance system such as Medicare.

Dr. Flowers did her medical training at Johns Hopkins, and began her career in pediatrics as a hospitalist in a rural hospital. A hospitalist, she explained in a podcast on progressive.org, works exclusively in the hospital, seeing patients, admitting them, recommending treatment, and monitoring progress. However, she became increasingly frustrated with the health insurance administrators who, with no medical training, were telling her how long a patient could stay in hospital, regardless of her recommendation. She decided to switch to private practice, but encountered the same issues there. Insurance companies were refusing to pay for certain tests or medicines Dr. Flowers recommended for her young patients. As she explained in an interview with Bill Moyers, "It didn't make sense. It wasn't based on what the patients need. It was based on what the insurance companies could get away with"

At last, the moment came when Flowers had had enough, a "eureka" moment. At a meeting with the office manager, she and the others in the practice were informed that in order to stay in business, only one healthy child could be seen a day. Everyone else had to be sick, and there was a certain quota to reach of children seen in an hour by each doctor. If there was more than one issue the parent wanted to discuss about his/her child, another appointment had to be made—no longer could Flowers spend the necessary time with both parent and child to answer all questions in one visit. It was all about money, and "That just wasn't why I went into medicine."

And so, Dr. Margaret Flowers got out of medicine and into the fight for a better healthcare system. She joined Physicians for a National Health Program, becoming a Congressional Fellow and opening a chapter in Maryland. She and other physicians in the organization advocate for a single payer insurance system—an expansion of Medicare to cover everyone. In 2009, she was arrested at a Senate Roundtable on Health Insurance for standing and speaking up on behalf of the single payer option, as no representative for that type of insurance was invited to the roundtable discussion. She says in an interview on being arrested, "Our first goal was to have a seat at the table....If we couldn't get a seat, at least we could expose the insincerity of the current

attempt at healthcare reform and show that single payer was actively being excluded.” The next year, Flowers wrote a letter to President Obama, explaining her position on healthcare and offering Medicare as a model for a better insurance system. She and a colleague stood outside of the White House, trying to get someone to come get the letter. They were told they had to mail the letter. They tried again the next day, and were turned away again. No one was going to come and take Flowers' letter, but instead of moving away, they stood their ground and were arrested.

Today, Dr. Margaret Flowers remains a powerful voice for single payer insurance, and is involved in the Occupy movement. Although she no longer practices medicine, her commitment to providing better healthcare to improve the lives of all people is total and tireless.