

What you can do to implement a National Health Insurance System:

- **Call** your congressional members and ask that they sponsor and actively advocate for Single Payer, HR 676 quality guaranteed healthcare for everyone! Call Congress toll free **1-866-338-1015**. Call today!
- **Share** your personal story at:
www.insurancecompanieskillpeople.blogspot.com
- **Organize** your congressional district to support a progressive candidate in 2008!
- **Organize** a Road Show event in your community or state!
- **Vote** for candidates that support HR 676.
- **Send** in postcards asking Speaker Nancy Pelosi to hold hearings on HR 676.
- **Circulate** a petition supporting HR 676
- **Host** a screening of SiCKO and/or a truth hearing in your area. Call our office for our SiCKO Discussion Guide and our Organizers' Workbook, **1-800-453-1305**.
- **Hold** a peaceful demonstration in front of insurance companies to expose their profit-driven interests.
- **Participate** in Vigils September 26th in Washington, D.C. or in your own city in honor of the 101,000 people who die unnecessarily in the United States every year because of the failures of the healthcare system.
- **View** the TAKE ACTION page on our website www.healthcare-now.org for more ideas and tips!


Created By

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DEATH BY SPREAD SHEET

**TESTIMONIALS OF LOSS FROM
THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.**

All statements included in this booklet were made public by citizens of the United States posted on the petition found at:

www.healthcare-now.org

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Dear Supporter,

This booklet contains testimonials detailing injustices of the American health care system. These are firsthand accounts of tragedy and death due to insurance denials and lack of coverage. At a time when 47 million American people are uninsured and 80 million more Americans have inadequate coverage, these expressions of suffering — posted to our online petition-document the experiences of people in the midst of this health care crisis. In a society that can attribute 101,000 unnecessary deaths each year to problems with our health insurance system and lack of preventative care, these are the voices of just a few of the victims. Remember, insurance companies must deny healthcare claims in order to increase their profits.

As we remember the people who have lost their lives, we must use this time to unite and take action. Many of us are merely one serious accident or illness away from experiencing the same plight of inexplicable denials of coverage that are found in these stories. Statistics show that insurance company abuses happen to people **regardless of insurance status, job status, age, or health history.**

NOW is the time to take action to stop these injustices from affecting future generations. NOW is the time to stop the health care industry from making profits off the denial of care, which ends in increased deaths and less actual care. We must shift away from the evil side of American health care into the compassion of a just, moral system.

Join us in our fight to change the current profit-driven, unjust insurance system into one that reflects the standards of the rest of the industrialized world with a guaranteed, single payer, national health care plan. The moral values of our nation call us to provide a great and just health care system. We must organize to end these unethical, unjust mistreatments that have caused people to write the stories that fill these pages.

Sincerely,
Healthcare-NOW!

ELIZABETH BREEDING, TX

I watched my best friend die 1 month after TennCare went bankrupt in TN. HE WAS 28 YEARS OLD WHEN HE DIED! He was told he wasn't "a priority." I guess not having any KIDNEYS just doesn't make the cut! I'm ashamed to be an American. What should I do when my COBRA runs out in less than 8 months? I can't get SS benefits from the government that I WORKED for or health insurance because I have Metabolic Muscular Dystrophy, an autoimmune disease and Fibromyalgia!

MATTHEW BUCHANAN, TX

In 2001, my father passed away from M.S. He worked as an RN at our local hospital for 20 years, when he was fired for poor job performance at 46 years old. At age 49, he soon discovered his poor job performance was because of a rapid development of the M.S. He had no job, no real money, we had to liquidate everything he owned (one 4 year old vehicle and \$12,000 in stocks before we could apply for Medicaid and disability. After paying for his monthly prescription (about \$2000 a month) we were soon broke. He died less than a year later. We didn't have the money for a nursing home, no money for rehabilitation. If we could have, he may still be alive today to see his first granddaughter. I have worked in insurance now for 3 years and wish every day we could get a better system for health care. Whatever you need from me you can have, just let me know. Matt

LYDIA LEE HARRY-MOZNICH, VA

My brother, Curtis Harry, at 54 years old applied for Medicaid because he could not stay employed since he was too sick. He had no insurance. Medicaid called me after he died to say they had turned him down as they had determined that he was healthy enough to work, therefore they could offer no help in paying his doctor's bills, or assisted-living expenses. I told them he had died and they said in that case they would approve it so the doctors could be paid. My brother was not their concern.

MICHAEL GASKILL, TN

How many more American citizens have to die because of this profit-oriented healthcare system we have? I think America deserves a lot more. I work in healthcare, and I see it with my own eyes. I've lost many friends to things insurance just wouldn't cover because there was no profit in it for the companies. WE DESERVE A LOT MORE!!!

JESSICA BYERLY, TX

I signed this petition in memory of my grandmother who toward the end of her life had to order medicine from Canada. At the age of 92, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a mastectomy. Unbelievably, she beat it with the help of numerous expensive treatments that left her with nothing. My grandmother was one of the first women in the 1930's to be a regional manager of a drug store chain. She was accused of sleeping her way to the top; she fought a hard fight for everything she ever had. She was a strong woman with the values of a saint and the strength of an ox. She worked and toiled every day of her life and never asked anyone for anything and gave everything to anyone in need. She was repaid by being forced to buy needed drugs from a country other than her own because she couldn't afford health care in America. Many nights she would read the inserts in the pharmaceutical bottles of all the adverse affects they could cause... all the disclaimers and depressing facts these companies laid out to protect THEMSELVES. What about protecting my sweet grandmother? Who was concerned about that? She died on hospice and my parents had to spend the remainder of her estate on yet more healthcare. For all her work and toiling, our only inheritance was our beautiful family memories. She wanted so much more for us, but there was nothing left to pass down... except her passion, values, and strength which I plan to use to help change this corrupt, backwards, self-serving, market-based healthcare system so that we can become a nation of WE and no longer be a nation of ME. Thank you.

PHILIP OSBORN, AK

Our son died last June because we could not afford the proper care and the HMO dragged its feet until it was too late. HR 676 won't bring him back, but it will stop the madness for everyone else. Hurry!

BRENDA OLIVAS, TX

For the brother I never knew. He died because he was denied care at the county hospital because my parents weren't insured. He was five months old and had a fever of 104. He was my parent's first born and their only son (they now have five daughters).

KEVIN GOLDEN, AR

My father had a severe case of Parkinson's disease. There were "experimental" procedures to implant what is basically a pacemaker into the brain to control the effects of Parkinson's (there was even a gray's anatomy show about this procedure). This procedure may not have saved his life but would have more than likely made his life better — what little he had left — but the insurance wouldn't cover the procedure because it was not a proven 100% effective procedure. This being said, his condition continued to get worse till he was hospitalized for seizures. While he was in the hospital, the heart doctor told him that he should get in a wheel chair and prepare to die. After a brief stay at the hospital, he was transferred to a rehab center to learn how to take better care of himself. His heart doctor took him off his diuretic meds. The day after he got out of rehab he was having trouble breathing and was swelling. He decided to try to do his exercises and during the exercise he had to stop because he lost control of his bowels. He stood up and fell over onto his bed and my mother tried CPR, but it didn't help because fluid had built up around his heart and that was that. The heart doctor was responsible. Other doctors confirmed this for us but they told us that legal action was impossible because of bills and things that president bush had put into effect. So because of the health care system in the United States, my father had a worse time with Parkinson's than in another country (Cuba per say), plus he was neglected and therefore died and we were left with bills upon bills, a lost loved one, and no way to fight back.

JILL DAVIS, NY

I support HR 676. I also believe that insurance companies need to be held criminally liable for any deaths that are the result of inadequate insurance. When watching Michael Moore's movie Sicko, I was strongly affected by the woman who lost her daughter because she took her to the wrong hospital. Someone should be in jail for that crime. Murder is Murder, whether it's done with a knife or with an insurance company denial. It is time for US citizens to take back control of our health.

MARCY GUIRAGOSSIAN, CA

My step father died after a triple bypass where upon a second surgery a staffer left a needle in his pleura which continued to fill up with fluid, and he was sent to rehab too soon, sent back to the hospital and never recovered. He was noted as saying “I thought hospitals were supposed to help you get better.” His wife, my mom, refused to file a lawsuit, she now wished she had. I was diagnosed with breast cancer 6 years ago at age 45 and was fortunate that my mom found out about the Breast Cancer Treatment fund which covered my costs, but my doctors refused to allow my case to go before the hospital’s board for a second opinion on a 2nd lumpectomy vs. mastectomy. I was put on chemo while awaiting my 2nd surgery. When asked why chemo would kill other cancer cells but not the breast cancer cells I was not given a definitive answer yet the biopsy following the mastectomy reveals no cancer cells present even though I’d had “unclear margins” — the doctor felt that was good news, I felt they’d taken my breast unnecessarily. I now have an implant that is misshapen and has scarred me for life. This time last year I experienced “unexplained weight loss” losing over 15 lbs down to 88lbs at 5ft. I had a colonoscopy during which I woke up screaming in pain while the doctor continued prodding. It felt like rape. I’m going to a counselor for my mental health. I still only weigh 94 lbs. I am being forced to return to work even though I feel I should be allowed to rehab and concentrate on my health care, as I have no hope that the Social Security Administration will approve my file for state disability which will take months. I am now experiencing severe back pain and fear that I may have a recurrence of cancer in my bones. I’ve already been diagnosed with stage 3 osteoporosis. This system is out of whack! PS. My mom and I watched Sicko last night and it made me cry, she couldn’t understand why.

JACK SHELLEY, PA

Yes, I support this bill and the effort. My aunt died because she was moved to a lower grade post cardiac care facility because of insurance concerns.

CHRISTINE, CA

The American people deserve and desperately need free healthcare today. I have two people in mind that are and have lost the battle with cancer. The first one had ovarian cancer, fought a good fight and thought she won. Around Christmas time the doctors told her it was coming back and their treatments would no longer work. Her family had to come up with 15 thousand dollars just for one month worth of chemo. Not to mention air fair, hotel and other needs while they would be in another state. 40 thousand dollars plus later this wonderful woman, mother and wife, lost her battle leaving behind two wonderful children, a husband, a funeral bill and a mountain pile of medical bills. Next, a hard working man has a horrible tumor on his spine so close to his brain they can not operate. Chemo seems to be working, then the doctors tell him and his wife if he truly wants to kick this cancer he needs 6 more rounds of chemo. Can you believe his health care told him that he has maxed out his Chemo for the year and will be allowed more chemo starting January 1st 2008? This was the last part of September 2007! Thank God for friends and family, they raised 12 thousand dollars; hopefully this will get him to January 1st 2008! This is not the way things should be done; this is not what I want for my children. The poor get poorer the rich get richer.

KATHERINE HERNANDEZ, PA

Our health care situation in this country is an atrocity. The latest round of nonsense — forcing people to buy products from these murderous corporations which sell health insurance under pain of further financial hardship in the form of fines and continued lack of coverage — is a disgrace. That it was permitted to happen in Massachusetts is a disaster, and I hope they can prevent it in California. Half my family is *dead* now because of the faulty and grotesque state of our so-called health care system, torn to pieces by the robber barons who own the insurance companies. Why in the Hell don’t we have REAL health care like they do most other places?

PAULINA BARBOUR, RI

There is a world of difference between what Dr. Kevorkian did with his program of compassionate euthanasia and what “For Profit Health Care” does. Denials to people who are ill but have options open, although expensive, and sometimes not even that, creates victims. We have, however inadvertently, legalized MURDER under the guise of “investor relations.”

LAURA LAMAN, TN

I had Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BCBS) for 17 years paying \$7,500 a year for the family plan. Now I can't get any insurance because I can't afford it. After having Vulvar cancer the BCBS gave me VIOXX when I had cancer and not until the ultra sound broke off did they order me an operation and found cancer. I only used my insurance policy ONE time in 17 years. It makes me SICKO!

VIRGINIA OGBORNE, NJ

It is a crime that all of our citizenry does not have healthcare. We tout that we are the wealthiest country in the World; we are not a 3rd World country and yet, there are citizens in our country that not only go to sleep hungry, but die because they do not have access to medical care. My cousin was one of those citizens. She died at 52 because she could not afford to go to a doctor! She worked cleaning houses for meager pay until, one day, she called for help. She was found in the bathtub in a pool of blood... by the time we got her to the hospital it was too late, her colon cancer was in advanced stages and she had 3-4 weeks to live. Her assigned oncologist abandoned her, but 2 young GI doctors worked on her, as she related, like a biology experiment, which allowed her to live 2 more months! That time she spent with family from Thanksgiving through the New Year. She died on January 3rd. Our case is only one; there are thousands like it. We need universal healthcare right now!

ANGELA RODGERS, MI

There should never be a choice between food and paying a medical bill. As an educated woman, I put myself through college without any form of health insurance, now with a good job, my husband and I both realize that one single catastrophic medical condition could destroy everything we have built for ourselves. Personally, my father stopped going to his heart doctor because he was drowning in medical bills that were being denied. Sadly, he died of a massive heart attack while working on the job because he had to work, and had to pay off his bills... I support the rights of every person to receive medical treatment.

ELIZABETH CALVIN, NY

Insurance companies are an obstacle to our receiving quality health care for the vast majority of Americans who have insurance and think they will be cared for in the event of need (I won't even mention the state of "preventive" care or care for those who are uninsured). In the past three years, I have witnessed the lack of coverage for two dear friends, both of whom had HMO insurance coverage through their jobs, and both of whom struggled to get coverage for the cancer treatment they needed in order to live. As I saw each of them struggling to survive and seeming to get better over the course of 18 months to two years, they found out that their insurance coverage would be ending as they had reached their limit of coverage. Just as they were getting better and needed additional treatments, the insurance companies determined that coverage would stop, no coverage for so-called "experimental" treatments would be allowed, and even though they were improving, they were left to die. What a travesty insurance companies have made of our access to good quality health care.

STEVEN DELL, CA

Healthcare in America is embarrassing. The richest and most powerful country in the world has the worst healthcare system ever. It's all about making money not caring and curing people. Look at little Natalie who died in Glendale California yesterday because CIGNA denied her liver transplant. What a shame, what a shame. YOU CAN'T MAKE MONEY OFF OF POOR PEOPLE GETTING SICK!!!!

ROBERT POREMSKI, IL

My daughter got sick in 2003 with cancer after her husband lost his job. She never told anyone she was sick because she knew the financial hardship it would cause and eventually the Hospital would take their house for unpaid medical bills. We lost her in the spring of 2004; she was only 39 yrs old. We read her diary and learned all she was feeling and thinking. Now I wonder how many others are just like her in this America? And how many before her? Even in third world countries you can get some kind of help, and if not, they will send you somewhere to get it. We have spent *trillions* on this war and trillions more will be spent before it's over with, when the money could have been used to save lives instead of destroy lives. GOD HAVE MERCY ON THE USA!

HEATHER WITTMAN, CO

I urge you to pass HR 676. I cannot obtain an individual health insurance plan due to a benign brain tumor I had removed five and one half years ago. My son cannot obtain health insurance due to a medical condition he was born with that was surgically repaired when he was two years old and requires no further treatment. I lost my husband three years ago, and while I have always had the good fortune to be a stay at home mother I am now looking, as I approach 50 years of age, that I am going to have to work full time to possibly obtain insurance for me and my son. This goes against everything one reads about how to help a child heal when they have lost a parent, against my own physical limitations since having brain surgery, but we are all being asked to sacrifice to possibly have health insurance. Wake up America, health insurance is a right, not a privilege. What is going to become of our nation if one cannot have health insurance? Think of the absolute chaos, we will no longer be a great nation of freedom.

DONALD BECK, CT

My wife died a year ago of cancer. At one time she needed a high-priced pill to stop her from vomiting. Our insurance wouldn't cover it. I'm retired. Please help our people of the USA. Pass HR 676 now!

LISA STROTHER, FL

The incident with the woman who lay dying on the floor, in a Los Angeles hospital while hospital staff DID NOTHING to help is absolutely horrific. This is an enormous wake up call to our government. OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS FAILING US!

CINDY WOLK, FL

My mom has gone bankrupt due to bills and my grand mom died while not being able to afford proper care, she was misdiagnosed. Please keep pressure on the evil people.

KATHLEEN BAUDINO, MO

I work with a man who had to sell his house to pay for his wife's cancer treatment. They had insurance, but it wasn't enough to save her life. He lost his home, his best friend and his financial security. Both of them played by the rules and were good people. We need to have the type of care every other industrialized nation provides its citizens.

RICHARD MAMCHES, FL

Let's stop keeping our heads buried in the sand like ostriches! America, get in line with the rest of the industrialized world! We need universal health care. My sister Janece died of breast cancer because she did not have health insurance and could not afford the treatment that could have saved her life. UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS, NO LATER THAN 2009!

PAULA BROWN, MO

My friend cashed in his life insurance policy to help pay for his medicine during the past 2 years. He sold his house and was living in a trailer in order to help with medical costs. His only daughter found him dead at home this past weekend. He had no life insurance to cover his funeral/burial costs. He was only in his 50's — too young to die. His medical problem started with back surgery. What a shame.

PATRICIA BENARD, NC

I am 63 and retired from teaching in New Orleans due to Katrina and the failure of the levees. I have no health insurance. If I have to go to the hospital, I could be forced to sell my house, and then would have no place to live. My pension is less than \$1000 a month. My plan is, if I get sick or injured, to stay home and die. If I lost my house, I'd have to kill myself anyway.

SANDY SHIFLET, MD

How many more people have to die in the name of the almighty dollar? How many is enough for congress to get it right? Just a ballpark figure will do. Someone should be required to answer that question.

FRANCES SILVEIRA, MA

Please pass this bill. I lost my only sister to Cancer and now my cousin is recovering from breast cancer. Please Help.

JEREMY CLARK, MI

At what point is the government going to start taking care of its people? My Dad died at 58 years old of a lung infection because he didn't have insurance. He was refused medical treatment over and over because his job refused to give him insurance and he was diabetic so no private company would insure him. THIS IS SICK!

DEBORAH ANDERSON, MI

Everyone needs health care. There are people that die every day because they don't have health care and not enough money to go to the doctors or hospital. I had a friend who died because she had a heart attack. She thought she pulled a muscle in her back — she was a waitress, she had 2 kids and instead of going to the hospital she went to bed. Her son found her dead the next morning; she was 39 years old. If she had had health care she would have gone to the hospital. The politicians in this country we all live in will never have that happen to them. They have made sure their set for life, but not the low income tax payers.

JILL KEES, FL

Today I will hold another person's hand as they breathe their last breath. It could be your mother, father, or grandparent. I am a Hospice nurse and daily I hear the voice of the people as they tell me how they wouldn't be in this situation if they weren't denied health care. Sad thing is these people aren't just the uneducated poor; many are educated middle and sometimes upper class citizens.

ROSE SEAQUILL, HI

It is time in our free country that those less fortunate have high quality health care. I have 2 sons that had the same disease. One had health insurance, the other did not. The one that did not is now dead. So please lets all come together as one to have good health care for us ALL.

DONALD DECKER, KY

My sister and my brother died due to inadequate health insurance and/or Doctors being afraid to send them to a specialist to confirm and treat their medical problems. Shame on our inconsiderate Representatives in Washington for favoring big insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies instead of the people they are supposed to represent.

WILLIAM RIDENOUR, IL

My father was born in poverty on a small Ozark farm. He died in poverty too, but not because of his own laziness or waste or mismanagement. He had been a successful commercial artist with 20 employees. No, he died in poverty because he was a hard worker and always paid his bills and died trying to pay the astronomical bills from the cancer that killed my mother. My father fought in WWII. He believed in this country and this country let him down. It's too late for my father. It's too late for too many. It's way past time for healthcare reform. It's time for single payer healthcare.

BETH STOVER, GA

In 2005, while living in California, we were elated to discover that we were expecting our second child. We did not have maternity insurance so we prepared ourselves for the \$17,000 out-of-pocket cost for a normal delivery in California and the \$35,000 out-of-pocket cost for a c-section. When I was 6 months in to my pregnancy my partner was offered a salaried position, WITH BENEFITS, at Kaiser Permanente in Northern California. He took it along with a huge pay cut so we would have the "benefits." On March 5, 2006, I gave birth to a post-term, stillborn, beautiful, Baby Girl. Our Daughter died because Kaiser withheld care and rudely sent me home. They were busy and couldn't be bothered and our Baby died the very next day. They could have saved our Daughter's life with a timely delivery or a c-section if they would have just taken the time to provide TRUE care. After our Baby's death, critical medical records just mysteriously "vanished." There has been no clear reason given for her death and Kaiser has prevented us from ever really knowing because of the records that became "lost." Kaiser is self-insured so their withholding of care is equivalent to an insurance denial. Must lives continue to be lost so that profit can be made? This is immoral, inhumane, and HEARTBREAKING. Quality, Universal healthcare is needed NOW.

TRACY PIERCE JR., 15Y/O, KS

My dad will never see me graduate from high school or see what kind of man I will become. I can never talk to him again, because all treatments my dad's doctor ordered were denied so my dad's cancer spread all inside his body and he died at home.

JULIE PIERCE, KS

My husband died of Kidney Cancer on 1/18/2006 at the age of 37, due to constant denials from my health insurance/my employer, as the trustees over the medical plan at my hospital were the final decision makers... we call this "DEATH BY DENIAL" we were featured in "SICKO." We MUST make a change, I do not want this to happen to another person ever!!

PAMELA HUNSTAD, KY

My mother died of cancer on April 21st. She worked her whole life until she became too sick. When she lost her job, of course she lost her health insurance. Her monthly medications cost her \$1200 and she only received \$1500 a month from disability. She was forced to leave her apartment and move in with her sister. Having cancer was difficult enough, but worrying about how she was going to afford her treatment is a stress no one in this country should have to endure. I was ashamed of our healthcare system then, and after seeing "Sicko," I am outraged. We have to do better.

ELIZABETH SINGH, LA

I don't care what else Congress talks about until they pass something that makes health care and health insurance available to all Americans. People I knew and cared about have died from lack of health insurance. My son has a chronic brain disorder which has caused him to be redlined out of every public and private health insurance there is. College educated, working, and otherwise healthy, he has been thrown out of society because he has an expensive chronic illness. I can't bear to lose him to the streets, so I have become his sole caregiver, with the expected consequences to my own health and productivity. My vote in 2008 will go to the candidate most likely to achieve Universal Healthcare. Cost isn't important because anything it costs will be less than the value of the lives that our present no care system is taking.

WENDE NABORS, TX

My baby sister Shelley had to have open-heart surgery to replace a heart valve when she was 31 years old. She was told that she couldn't work any more and to apply for disability. For ten long years she applied, and every time she was denied. She wasn't so interested in the money as she was medical assistance. In addition to her heart problems, she later developed liver disease. She had been told that she needed interferon treatments, but was unable to get them because she didn't have medical insurance. She knew all along if she didn't get the needed treatments that she was going to die. On May 9th of last year at 9:30 am Shelley finally got the long awaited call to inform her she had been approved for disability and medicare. I was the one who took the call, but it was like a slap in the face for my baby sister had died two hours earlier.

SHARON BLAIR, IN

My youngest son died on January 7, 2001 at the age of 19. He did not have health insurance and was ignored because of this. The story is long and complicated and just too painful to recite. However, if he had insurance during this time I think he might have had a chance of survival. After watching 'Sicko' the DVD, I became outraged even more than I already was and I have made a pledge to myself and his memory that I will not be quiet about how this country is ignoring it's US citizens. I once was proud to be an American and I do not feel that way anymore. This must stop now! Our economy would turn around if individuals did not have to pay premiums to the insurers. Employers would have more money to interject into the economy if they did not have to assist with our premiums. Homeless people would have a better chance than they do now. Crime would decrease. The foreclosure rates would decrease, and on and on. Please do something NOW!