



mssa VOICE

October/November 2009

...shaping Minnesota communities since 1893.

Volume 116 Number 5

Special points of interest:

- ◆ MSA is Your Association
- ◆ MSA Awards Four Scholarships
- ◆ Increase in Prescription Drug and Heroin Use

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Betty McCollum Address MSSA Members

By Rod Halvorson, Executive Director & Stan Groff, Legislative Liaison

As part of our 2008 MSSA Visioning process, our Association has decided to become more active in our public policy advocacy at the federal level. This led to an invitation to a member of our Minnesota Congressional delegation to join us during the August Congressional recess to talk about the "hottest" issue pending in Congress - Health Care Reform.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN 4th CD) gratuitously accepted our invitation. Below you will find a report for Stan Groff that summarizes the major points discussed at our **MSSA Health Care Town Hall meeting**.

Ask Representative Betty McCollum what her thoughts are about Federal health care reform and you will get a detailed analysis of not only the ills of the system, but also

what she thinks are some strong principles for reform. MSSA did ask her about it and she seemed happy to spend an hour talking with about 80 (40 in person and 40 online) MSSA members and staff at our office in St. Paul on Tuesday, September 1.

She believes deeply that health care is a fundamental right. To that end, she has recently introduced legislation to amend the Constitution – H.J. Res. 4, the *Health Protection Amendment* – that would make health care a right for all citizens of the United States. If passed, and adopted by the states, this would join the several other civil rights making health care a right enforceable by the Constitution.

Rep. McCollum describes the current system as broken, fundamentally in need of change, not
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Great American Road Trip

The MSSA Conference Council has been busy sifting through workshop proposals, searching for the perfect keynote speaker, working on the exhibit maps, and planning special events for the 117th Annual Training Conference & Expo.

With the move to the Hilton, we will have new networking events for you to take advantage of.

The Hilton does not offer the setting the Sheraton did for cabanas. But don't worry, the committee has come up with a plan! We

will be offering "The Great American Road Trip Ballroom Bash." What does this mean? We will have 20'x20' "suites" setup in the ballroom. Agencies and Regions can reserve the space, decorate it, wear costumes, offer games just as they did in the cabanas. The "suites" can be purchased alone or with hotel room nights. There are two major changes to the cabana like event:

- ◆ MSSA will purchase the food and there will be a cash bar.
- ◆ The grand prize for Most Outstanding Suite has been increased to \$500.

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**By Rod Halvorson,
Executive Director**

Executive Director's Report

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effective as measured by international standards and driven by entrenched financial interests.

Many proponents of change, including the President can list the fundamental flaws and McCollum can do it with the best of them. The ones we heard on Tuesday included using the emergency room as the first point of access for over 60 million uninsured and under-insured people in this country; the loss of a job or an employer's belt tightening too often means the loss of health care for millions of families; the fact that our country spends \$2.4 trillion a year for health care – almost twice as much per person as any other country – but we rank 37th in the world in health care outcomes; rationing of health care services by insurance companies (something she calls putting an insurance bureaucrat between you and your doctor); and the practice of insurance companies “finding” a pre-existing condition or a technicality to cancel coverage for a sick policyholder rather than paying a claim which is also called “dumping the sick.”

The insurance industry came under sharp criticism by McCollum, repeatedly pitting them and the opponents of health care reform as protecting billions in corporate profits and therefore asserting that health care reform is by no means a sure thing this Fall as a result.

Finally, she assured us that health care system is broken when there are 150,000 unnecessary deaths each year from avoidable medical errors and substandard care.

Rep. McCollum's standards and principles for change are equally in the same vein: put people before profits, make preventive care a priority, and make social responsibility and individual responsibility the cornerstones of an expanded health care system.

As for moving forward with health reform in Congress she calls for the following principles:

- ◆ Every child in America deserves to

have access to health care when they need it.

- ◆ If you love your doctor and like your current insurance – nothing needs to change for you. You keep what you have.
- ◆ There must be a patient centered approach to health care in which quality care improves outcomes with a greater focus on prevention and healthy behaviors.
- ◆ A public insurance option that will increase competition in the marketplace, keeping premium costs down, and provides affordable insurance for all Americans.
- ◆ Prohibiting discrimination by insurance companies based on pre-existing conditions and ending the use of annual or lifetime caps on payment to deny coverage. It is time policyholders get the coverage they paid for.
- ◆ Strengthening Medicare by eliminating the waste, fraud and abuse that siphons valuable health care dollars away from our seniors and into the pockets of crooks.
- ◆ Eliminating the Medicare part D “donut hole” to make prescription drugs affordable for all seniors and mandating Medicare to negotiate with drug companies for best prices for taxpayers.
- ◆ Paying for reforms with efficiencies, expanded preventive care that saves money, and cutting the excessive profits out of the system, not more deficit spending.
- ◆ Bi-partisanship. Minnesota has been treated unfairly under Medicare with our doctors and physicians being paid less than half of what providers in Florida receive. The entire Minnesota congressional delegation supports fixing the Medicare geographic payment inequities that penalize our state.
- ◆ Supporting health professionals and clergy working together to provide patients and families information, counseling, and options that enhance human dignity and respect one's faith at the end of a loved one's life.

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Agency Member Pinnacle Services, Inc.

Pinnacle Services is an innovative, award-winning multi-service provider for children and adults with disabilities. Pinnacle provides support to help people achieve their personal goals and improve the quality of their lives. Our services are flexible. We meet each individual's needs for design, delivery and level of support. In addition, we bring cultural diversity, consumer satisfaction, person-centered services, high standards and proven quality to the consumers we serve.

Pinnacle Services currently offers:

- ◆ Home Care Services
- ◆ Case Management/Service Coordination
- ◆ Supported Employment Services
- ◆ In Home Family Support
- ◆ Independent Living Skills
- ◆ Semi-Independent Living Services
- ◆ Assisted Living
- ◆ Corporate Foster Care
- ◆ Supported Living Services
- ◆ Respite Care

Our *vision* at Pinnacle Services is to empower people to achieve their full potential and to realize their dreams. Our *mission* is to ensure that quality services are provided to the consumers we serve, so that they may achieve their full potential and realize their dreams. We will achieve this mission by utilizing, investing, and celebrating our consumer's needs, dreams, and choices in regards to where they live, learn, work and play.

For more information on Pinnacle Services visit www.pinnacleservices.org.

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In addition to the change to Thursday evening, we will be offering several new venues for Wednesday evening.

Dine Around—Minneapolis offers fabulous dining options. No matter what the size of your budget, you will always find a great meal here—from a local sandwich shop with five-star online community reviews to a five-star restaurant. Join fellow human service professionals for the Dine-Around, sure to be one of the most popular conference networking events. MSSA and Meet Minneapolis have reservations at a number of great local area restaurants. To participate, stop by the Dine-Around table at the conference registration area to make your final choice. A host will lead each group in an evening of dining and networking offering you an opportunity to visit Minneapolis with peers.

Pinnacle Pub Crawl—Pinnacle Services will be hosting a Pub Crawl on Wednesday evening. Pinnacle staff will act as tour

guides to some of the most popular local establishments within walking distance of the Hilton. Stay tuned for more information on the sites we will visit and how to register.

Comedy Club & Improv Lessons—A new addition to the Comedy Club will be Improv Lessons. Ever wonder how they get up on the stage and do what they do? Well ComedySportz will show you. Don't miss this popular event! Come prepared to laugh and learn.

Another change to the Wednesday evening line up will be no DJ and Dance. With so many options downtown, we figured you would like to get out and explore.

In addition to these events, watch the MSSA website for more ideas. We are working with Meet Minneapolis to put together a list of theatre, sporting events etc.



Get Your Nomination In

Do you work with someone every day that is totally awesome at their job, but receives so little recognition? Are there Volunteers in your agency you who do so much that you wonder if their days are longer than 24 hours? Are there foster parents you work with who you want to clone many times over? Is your agency involved in a collaboration that you think the entire state should know about? Well if you answered yes to any of these questions, then you should think about submitting a MSSA Awards Nomination.

MSSA give out Awards in ten categories at the MSSA Spring Conference and Expo in March. The nominations for the awards come from our members. Some of them come from the Regional Awards that are given at many of the Regional Fall Conferences other applications are submitted directly to the MSSA State Office.

The awards include:

- ◆ **Adult Foster Care** recognizes foster care provided to adults. Nominees should demonstrate an outstanding effort of providing a stable and supportive environment which allows for client growth.
- ◆ **Child Foster Care** recognizes outstanding foster care provided to children. Nominees for this award should demonstrate an outstanding effort of providing a stable and supportive environment which allows for children's growth and development.
- ◆ **Special Needs Foster Care** recognizes outstanding foster care provided to special needs children (physically or developmentally disabled, EBD, learning disabilities and/or mental health issues, etc.). Nominees for this award should demonstrate an outstanding effort of providing a stable and supportive environment which allows for children's growth and development.
- ◆ **Kinship Care Provider** recognizes outstanding kinship care provided to children or adults. Nominees for this

award should demonstrate an outstanding effort of providing a stable and supportive environment which allows for growth and development

- ◆ **Volunteer Service** recognizes outstanding service in the area of Volunteer Service. Nominees for this award must be volunteers (not paid staff) whose involvement evidences a significant contribution to clients, agency, and community
- ◆ **Outstanding Staff Achievement** recognizes individuals who routinely exemplify outstanding service to clients
- ◆ **Individual Distinguished Services** recognizes an individual for outstanding service and leadership to MSSA.
- ◆ **Outstanding Student** recognizes students who routinely exemplify outstanding academia.
- ◆ **Community Collaboration** recognizes a community which collaborates in a meaningful way to provide a set of services to a client population(s).
- ◆ **Morris Hursh Award** recognizes a Minnesotan who has had a national impact on the delivery of Human Services.

Each Region also offer awards and have different deadlines. If you are interested in submitting nominations on a regional level, visit your regional page on <http://www.mnssa.org>, click on regions and select your region on the left.

To submit an award nomination to the MSSA State office visit <http://www.mnssa.org/nominations.doc>. Return the form and any attachments to MSSA office, 125 Charles Ave, St. Paul, MN 55103 or fax to MSSA, attention Deb Most, (651) 224-6540, no later than **November 20, 2009**.

If you have questions, contact Deb Most, Director of Member Services, at (651) 789-4328 or deb@mnssa.org.

Would Your Agency Benefit from a Block Rate?

The MSSA Block Rate offers agency members the opportunity to send an unlimited number of staff and board members to the Annual Training Conference & Expo for one flat rate. The rate is based on your agency budget.

There is no limit of the number of staff you can send. The only requirement is that individuals utilizing the block rate be an individual agency member or individual member of MSSA. If they are not currently a member, they can join and sign up under the block rate.

The conference is for anyone working in the human service field--social workers to case aides, therapists to financial workers, directors to commissioners--and everything in between.

Staff can join MSSA on the conference registration form. Annual membership dues for a professional is \$35, for a student, retiree, unemployed or volunteer the rate is \$20.

The best way to determine if the block rate

is a value to your agency, is to take your block rate fee divided by the \$175 conference member rate. This will give you the minimum number of staff or board members you need to send to break even. If you plan to send more than the minimum number, the block rate is more cost effective. The more staff you send, the better per person rate you receive. Some agencies pay as little as \$50/person.

MSSA hosts the largest, most comprehensive human service conference in the Midwest. More than 2800 human service professionals gather to attend 200 workshops and institutes, exchange information with more than 150 exhibitors, and visit with peers. In addition, attendees can earn up to 19 continuing education hours from the MN Board of Social, ND Board of Social Welfare, MN Board of Marriage and Family Therapy, MN Board of Behavioral Health, MN Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators, MN Continuing Legal Education Board, and the MN Board of Psychology.

Contact MSSA at 651/644-0556 to register your agency for the MSSA Block Rate.

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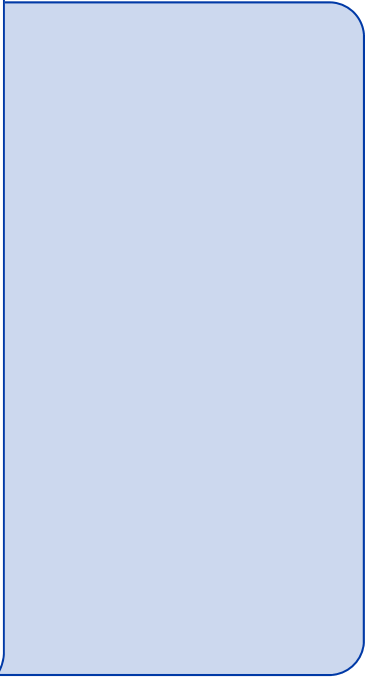
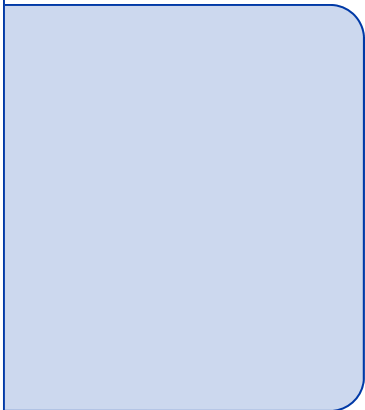
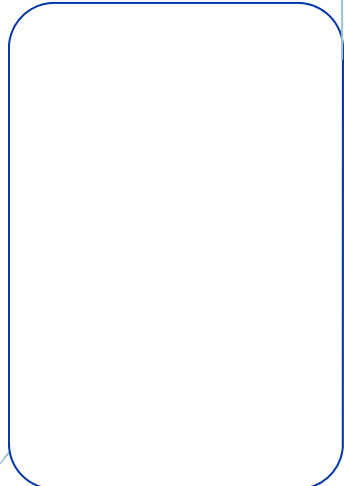
After her prepared comments Rep. McCollum took questions and comments. Several of our members wanted to be sure that she was aware of the county based purchasing option as a model of health care reform whose approach mirrored many of her principles and that Federal healthcare reform would not do harm to county based purchasing. Member Clark Gustafson emphasized holistic care management as a hallmark of county based purchasing.

In answer to a question about finding the money to pay for all of this, her response was broad-based and included taxes on the wealthy, taxing excess health care benefits (often misunderstood), improved safety (including simple things like frequent hand washing), preventive care, best practices like those often used by

Minnesota care providers, and simplified billing and paperwork.

Finally, she made an excellent point about how conditioned Americans have become to paying for uncompensated care. The shifting of such care to our insurance premiums, property taxes, state budgets and charity care are very costly and an unseen additional price we pay for the non-system we have today.

MSSA wishes to acknowledge Representative McCollum's excellent presentation and her willingness to take the time to visit with us. We also want to thank President Raeone Loscalzo for moderating the event and the leadership of MSSA's three Councils for sponsoring the event: Legislative Council – Co-chairs Alby Cylkowski and Judy Corrao, Public Agency Council – Gary Sprynczynatyk and the Private Agency Council – Patrick Masyga.





MSSA Leadership Comes in All Shapes & Sizes

Are you interested in being more involved in MSSA? The MSSA Nominations Committee is currently seeking creative, energetic, innovative people to serve on the Board of Directors.

Open positions include:

- ◆ President Elect
- ◆ Secretary
- ◆ Private Agency Council
- ◆ Metro Regions Representative
- ◆ SW District Representative
- ◆ NE District Representative

Duties of an MSSA Board Member include:

1. Determine the organization's mission and purposes
2. Select the chief executive
3. Support the chief executive and assess his or her performance.
4. Ensure effective organizational planning

5. Ensure adequate resources
6. Manage resources effectively
7. Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services
8. Enhance the organization's public standing
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability
10. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance
11. Recruit members to the organization
12. Participate in Delegate Assembly
13. Be visible and present at educational events

To submit your nomination, complete the form and return to the MSSA office. The form is online at http://www.mnssa.org/index_files/MSSALeadership.htm.

New Award Offered—Outstanding Retiree

MSSA recognizes an individual for outstanding service and to the Human Service Community after they have retired. They must not have full-time employment. The retiree's involvement evidences a significant contribution to clients, agency, community or MSSA.

- ◆ Individual has made an outstanding contribution to MSSA currently or in the past
- ◆ Individual participates in, promotes and is/has been recognized for their commitment to the field of Human Services.
- ◆ Individual scope of work has a large impact in state and community.

- ◆ Individual has demonstrated use of personal skills and experience to contribute to community service.
- ◆ **Nominee is a current or past member of MSSA.**

To nominate a retiree visit www.mnssa.org/Retiree.doc. Please submit an award nomination to the MSSA State office visit <http://www.mnssa.org/nominations.doc>. Return the form and any attachments to MSSA office, 125 Charles Ave, St. Paul, MN 55103 or fax to MSSA, attention Deb Most, (651) 224-6540, no later than **November 20, 2009**.



State Receives up to \$35 Million Federal Grant to Increase Health Care Access

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has been awarded almost \$35.3 million over five years to help uninsured Minnesotans receive health care through local access to care programs. The money will be used to make grants to community agencies for programs providing affordable coverage for preventive health care services to people who are not eligible for public programs and unable to afford private insurance.

Minnesota was one of 13 states to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The first-year grant is \$4.6 million and the state will need to re-apply for funding each year to access the full \$35 million. An additional \$30 million from non-federal sources will be contributed to the total project funding primarily from in-kind services from community agencies and DHS.

"Partnerships between state, local, and private entities are important in providing health care for the uninsured," said Minnesota Human Services Commissioner Cal Ludeman. "These grants will help community health organizations provide preventative care."

Initially three community agencies will receive funding to expand local access to care programs, also known as multi-share models, with funding provided by a combination of community sources, employers and enrollees:

- **Portico Healthnet**, which serves low-income uninsured individuals and families in Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties

- **HealthShare** of Duluth, which will expand its multi-share program to include people in St. Louis, Carlton, Cook, Lake, Itasca, Koochiching and Aitkin counties

- **PrimeWest Health** that will create a program to serve Beltrami, Big Stone, Clearwater, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, McLeod, Meeker, Pipestone, Pope, Renville, Stevens and Traverse counties.

Up to 10,000 uninsured Minnesotans are estimated to receive coverage through the programs, which are expected to be open to people with incomes ranging from about \$37,900 for a single person to \$77,175 for a family of four. DHS will provide tools and assistance to community agencies to enroll people who are eligible in the local access to care programs or state health care programs. DHS will also expand the multi-share models statewide through grants and create a supportive infrastructure for the programs. The programs will be evaluated by the State Health Access Data Assistance Center at the University of Minnesota Division of Health Policy and Management in the School of Public Health.

More information is available in a fact sheet, <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-6001-ENG>.

Delegate Assembly

November 13th
TIES Building
1667 Snelling Avenue North
Falcon Heights, MN
Mark Your Calendar!



Minnesota Social Service Association
 125 Charles Avenue
 St. Paul, MN 55103

<http://www.mnsocialserviceassoc.org>

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VOICE

Our mission is to provide leadership to enhance the lives of Minnesotans by supporting diversity, impacting public policy, educating, and communicating among human service professionals.

MSSA Officers

President, Raeone Loscalzo
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President Elect, Val Mersch
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Executive Director,
 Rod Halvorson
Director Member Services,
 Deb Most
Director Program Development & Communications,
 Stephanie Kibler
Legislative Liaison, Stan Groff

OCTOBER

- 26** Legislative Council, 9:00 AM, MSSA
- 27** Conference Program Committee, 10:00 AM, MSSA

NOVEMBER

- 12** Conference Council, 2:30 PM, Axel's (located at the Radisson), Roseville, MN
- 13** Delegate Assembly, 9:00 AM, TIES Building, 1667 Snelling Avenue North, Falcon Heights, MN