Dear Friend,

In February 2017, President Donald Trump proclaimed to a group of governors, “Nobody knew health care could be so complicated.” Well. At Consumers for Affordable Health Care, we knew.

We knew because we have been fighting for quality, affordable health care for everyone in Maine for nearly 30 years.

In 2016 alone, we helped over 5,800 people navigate a bewildering health care system that often left them feeling powerless, recovering over $150,000 for Maine people in denied medical claims and helping hundreds find quality, affordable coverage on the Health Insurance Marketplace.

We made sure that the voice of Maine consumers was heard in rooms where the voices of health care or insurance industry speak so loudly. We successfully fought to preserve hospital free care, a vital safety net for Mainers who have no other options. We advocated for consumers when insurance companies proposed double digit premium increases. And we successfully passed a bill that requires the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to contract with a Maine nonprofit to provide advocacy services to people who have MaineCare.

Over the last year, we engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process and emerged as an even stronger, more vibrant organization with a refreshed mission:

To advocate for Maine people to be heard, respected, and well-served in a health system that provides coverage, access, and quality, affordable care to all.

The threats we now face have only strengthened our resolve. We will continue to fight.

We will fight to protect the gains in coverage that we have made under the Affordable Care Act.

We will fight against huge cuts to Medicaid that threaten the care so many families, older Mainers, and Mainers with disabilities rely on.

We will fight to ensure that more Maine people get quality, affordable health care they can afford. And through it all, we will make sure that consumers always have a voice at the table.

No matter what happens, we are here for the people of Maine where you need us, when you need us.

Best,

Emily Brostek

CAHC 2016 POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ...fighting to make sure that the state met its obligation to maintain an ombudsman program to monitor MaineCare (LD 1498), organizing the Legislature to override the Governor’s veto.

- ...continuing to fight for Medicaid expansion, relentless in our work to fulfill our mission – that all people in Maine have access to quality, affordable health care.

- ...monitoring and opposing the huge rate increases requested by Maine’s insurance companies in the individual market.

- ...partnering with Maine Transgender Network to hold listening sessions with LGBTQ consumers across the state on their experiences with health coverage in Maine, presenting our findings in a report to Maine’s Bureau of Insurance.

- ...working with other stakeholders to successfully convince the Portland City Council to drop the exclusion on transgender care and coverage in Portland’s municipal health plan.

HELP US DO THE WORK WE DO. Visit mainecahc.org and click on “Donate” for more information.
THOUSANDS OF TIMES A YEAR, WE’RE READY WHEN MAINE PEOPLE NEED EXPERT ANSWERS

5,818 HELPLINE CALLS

1,053 CALLS WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

21 APPEALS CASES

$150,008
CAHC helped people get $150,008 worth of services and coverage that had been initially denied!

HELP US DO THE WORK WE DO.
Visit mainecahc.org and click on “Donate” for more information.

DONATE
**2016 Financial Data Summary**

**Income**
- Foundation Grants: $781,162
- Donations: $26,019
- Events & Other: $20,417
- Interest/Other: $139
- Total Income: $827,737

**Expenses**
- Program: $741,730
- General & Admin.: $78,198
- Fundraising: $1,774
- Total Expenses: $821,702

Changes in Net Assets: $6,035
- Net Assets Beginning of Year: $374,525
- Net Assets End of Year: $380,560

Visit mainecahc.org and click on “Donate” for more information.
When Erik first called the HelpLine two years ago, he and his son were both uninsured. They had previously been covered by MaineCare, but had lost it six months earlier when DHHS determined they were no longer eligible.

Erik has a heart condition and worried he wouldn’t be able to buy health insurance with his pre-existing condition. So, after they lost MaineCare, Erik started paying for their health care out of pocket- but the medical bills quickly piled up. Erik says, “It was stressful to know that every time I went into the hospital I was building up this debt.” Despite the costs, he couldn’t risk going without care, “I would have if I was younger, but at that point, since my health was such an important thing, I just did it and said ‘I’ll worry about it later.’ But it was scary knowing that I would have to pay it back.”

Now, more than two years later, Erik is still paying off his medical bills from the six months he was uninsured.

After going without coverage for half a year, Erik learned the ACA protected people with pre-existing conditions and that he couldn’t be denied or charged more for coverage because of his heart condition. Erik says, “As soon as I heard that, the lights went on and I just got going.” He called the CAHC HelpLine and set up an appointment to enroll in coverage.

During Erik’s appointment, it became clear to CAHC staff that his son was eligible for low-cost MaineCare. CAHC contacted DHHS and discovered that DHHS had miscalculated Erik’s income when they had terminated his son’s coverage. Through help from CAHC, Erik got his son’s MaineCare coverage back and purchased a plan for himself through the Health Insurance Marketplace.

Because of the consumer protections and financial assistance under the ACA, Erik could enroll in coverage and get care he needed without accumulating debt. Getting his son’s MaineCare back also helped, he says, “It’s really nice now when booster shots are covered. It’s just a sense of relief. That’s the biggest thing: peace of mind.”

Erik knows firsthand the importance of having access to quality, affordable coverage, “I think it behooves everyone for everyone to be able to get health care so they don’t have to stress out about themselves or their children… It’s scary not having insurance and the older you get the scarier it gets. Even when you’re younger, anything could happen. Everyone should be covered.”

Here at CAHC, we couldn’t agree more! If you have questions about your coverage options, medical bills, or would like to help ensure all Mainers can get quality, affordable health care, CAHC is here for you, too!

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Call our Helpline today at 1-800-965-7476.
Consumers for Affordable
Health Care is an essential resource for not only
Mainers, but for our navigator team here at Planned
Parenthood. From their hotline to their MaineCare info sessions,
CAHC has provided us with endless materials to best help our
patients navigate the healthcare system, especially with the
rollout of the new MaineCare Limited Family Planning
Benefit. —Jessica Milinichik, Planned Parenthood
of Northern New England

IN 2016, CAHC DISTRIBUTED
MORE THAN 152,938
EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS.
When people across Maine had questions
about MaineCare, the ACA, free or sliding
scale care, or specialized programs, we could
get them the information they needed.

The hands-on examples
and reference tools were most
helpful. Can’t wait for next year.
—Teri Marino, Maine General
Medical Center

There are not enough
superlatives for the kind,
attentive, diligent, patient, dedicated
and thorough staff at Consumers for
Affordable Health Care!
—Joan E Carey, Ph.D.,
HelpLine Caller

Before I talked to you, I was crying
my eyes out. We spent an hour and a half on the
phone, you were very patient, calm, and made me feel
like we were going to get through this. Before we hung
up, I found a plan that would cover my insulin. You were
a huge help. Thank you so much!”
—Jennifer Blanch, HelpLine Caller

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Consumers for Affordable
Health Care
Advocating the right to quality,
affordable health care for every
person in Maine.
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