



Getting to the Root of the Problem GRASSROOTS

The Newsletter of the Hunger Action Network of New York State

September 2003

Faces of Hunger Action Network: Leigh Seymour

Leigh Seymour became an active member of the HANNYS last fall. In that one year of active membership, Leigh has shown her commitment, enthusiasm, and passion for social justice in so many ways that our NYC staff has sometimes struggled to keep up with her boundless energy and interminable ideas!

Leigh moved to NYC from Florida looking for a new beginning for herself a few years ago. In Florida, Leigh made outstanding contributions to her community – meriting a letter from the Governor of Florida thanking her for “confronting problems and working on their solutions to help bring out the best in [her] community.”

Leigh helped coordinate a Neighborhood Crime Watch program, organized community festivals, produced community newsletters, and wrote and won a grant from the Children’s Board of Tampa which culminated in the opening of the Palmetto Beach Community Care Cen-

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Hunger Action Annual Meeting Mon. Sept. 29

Hunger Action Network will hold its 21st Annual Membership Meeting in Poughkeepsie on Monday Sept. 29.

Since 1982, Hunger Action has been the leading statewide anti-hunger group working to end hunger in NYS. Our work combines grassroots organizing with state level research, education and advocacy.

We invite you to join us in Poughkeepsie to:

- learn about the upcoming challenges our state faces, including a projected \$5 billion plus deficit in the 2004-05 state budget;

- provide input into Hunger Action’s long-term strategic organizing plan;
- help elect new members for our state-wide Board of Directors
- network with other anti-hunger advocates from throughout New York;
- learn new skills on advocacy and fundraising.

Our members are individuals and organizations working together to end hunger. Membership is open to anyone who wants to be heard in the struggle to eliminate hunger and promote economic justice.

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Legislative Roundup

The 2003 Legislative Session was marked by a very large budget deficit – the largest this state has ever seen. It provided many opportunities for advocates to push for creative solutions to close the deficit in a way that made our tax system more progressive and fair.

The budget took up a lot of time and many other issues were overshadowed as a result. The Governor and Senate refused to deal with the issue of education for welfare participants until Congress resolved TANF.

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Notes from the ED

Hunger Action Network was pleased that our efforts to promote a fair revenue solution to the \$12 billion state budget deficit had an impact this year, with the state legislature enacting a surcharge on the personal income tax on wealthy New Yorkers and closing a few of the corporate tax loopholes. The state legislators even managed to override the Governor's vetoes of their budget proposals. It was also impressive to see such a broad range of human service, labor, faith, women's, and community groups come together to say that there were "Better Choices" than the Governor's budget proposals.

Unfortunately, next year's budget will present even more of a challenge. Most of the easiest budget gap closing solutions were passed this year, including the \$4 billion one-shot from bonding out the state's tobacco settlement. Estimates of the 2004-05 state budget deficit begin at \$5 billion. We will have to strengthen our effort to close more of the myriads of corporate tax loopholes.

This year's state budget also continued to severely under fund many key programs. Emergency food programs were cut by nearly \$2 million. The major cutbacks in human service programs that were enacted during the previous two years of "barebones" state budgets were continued. The state's welfare (TANF) surplus was raided even more to balance the state budget, while key job and education initiatives to help welfare participants went unfunded. For the 13th year in a row the legislature and Governor failed to raise the welfare grant cash grant.

After the budget was passed, the state's highest court also ruled that the funding formula for public schools was unconstitutional and had deprived NYC of needed funds - a problem also facing other urban centers as well as rural areas. Billions of additional funds will be needed to adequately address the problem, make the budget fight even more difficult. Progress has also been slow in Congress in terms of reauthorizing the federal TANF program. The Bush administration continues to push for increased work hours and promotion of marriage while ignoring the need for education, training, child care and job creation programs.

Advocates are also continuing to work to promote increased funding for the various federal child nutrition programs up for reauthorization. Yet as Congress prepares to return to D.C. after Labor Day, our message is "to do no harm" to the child nutrition programs. There are indications that some members will want Child Nutrition Reauthorization bills that include a substantial increase in the percentage of children who have to prove how little their families earn in order to receive free or reduced-price school meals,

Hunger Action Network remains hopeful that our elected officials will find the political will to end hunger. To help us maximize our impact with our limited resources in these difficult times, we have launched a three-year strategic planning effort to establish issue and organizational priorities and clear strategies. This will be a key focus at our annual membership meeting in Poughkeepsie on Monday, September 29th. I hope you will be able to join us.

Bich Ha Pham, Executive Director

Grassroots is published four times a year by the Hunger Action Network of New York State.

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Child Nutrition Programs Reauthorization Update

The House and Senate both are expected to mark up Child Nutrition Reauthorization bills during the third and fourth weeks of September. For up to date info, see www.frac.org

Through federally funded programs like school lunch and breakfast, WIC and other child nutrition programs, millions of poor children eat healthy meals each day. In addition to fighting hunger, these programs increasingly help low-income children to benefit from quality child care and afterschool programs with educational and recreational activities.

Funding has not kept pace with the growth and demand for these programs, much less with changing demographics like more working parents. Modest investments in the child nutrition programs will further reduce hunger and improve our children's health, well-being and educational success. Child nutrition investments are wise uses of public funds because they bring down other public and private costs in health and education.

Federal Budget Update

Pres. Bush's budget proposal and the House Labor-HHS-Education FY 2004 spending bill zeroes out the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP). The Senate's version maintains CFNP funding at last year's \$7.28 million level. Hunger Action has received CFNP funding for our statewide anti-hunger work including technical assistance to EFPs, community gardens, child nutrition program outreach and hunger awareness activities. We would not be able to continue these projects without funding.

There are indications that the Child Nutrition Reauthorization bills will include a substantial increase to the percentage of children who have to prove how little their families earn in order to receive free or reduced-price school lunch.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study suggests that as many as 1 in 5 children who are certified as eligible for free school lunch may be ineligible because the family's income may be too high, yet poverty data experts have found this overcertification estimate to be unreliable.

While the USDA study does not actually prove that there is an overcertification problem, recent USDA data suggest that increasing the percentage of families who have to document their income:

- Will NOT help improve the accuracy of certifications in the program, and
- Will harm schools and children by deterring thousands of eligible low-income children from the school lunch program.

For child nutrition program funding, in the Senate bill WIC was funded at \$130 million below the Administration's request of \$4.769 billion but does not cut as deeply as the final House version (\$181 million below the President's request). In addition to setting the overall WIC funding level, the Senate appropriated \$125 million for the WIC contingency fund (less than the President's requested \$150 million) and \$30 million for Management Information Systems, \$10 million for breastfeeding peer counselors,

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\$5 million for obesity prevention demonstration projects. TEFAP was funded at \$140 million, including \$50 million in administrative funding (transportation and storage costs) and allows the Secretary to move an additional \$10 million into the administrative account.

Summary of the 2003 Legislature

Budget Deficit

There are two main ways to solve a budget deficit – or lack of money: Raise money (raise revenue) or cut spending (cut services, programs, jobs, etc).

The State Legislature passed (by overriding the Governor's veto) three major proposals that raised revenue by requiring wealthy individuals and corporations to pay their fair share:

Personal Income Tax Surcharge on Wealthy NYers – The Legislature temporarily increased the personal income tax rate by .65% for individuals earning over \$100,000 and couples earning over \$150,000, and an additional .2% increase for individuals and families earning over \$500,000. (Expected to raise \$1.5 - \$1.7 billion)

Decoupling from the Federal Bonus Depreciation Credit – In March 2002, Congress passed a law that gives businesses a bonus tax deduction related to the depreciation (loss of value) of certain property they use. Decoupling means we decided not to be part of that new law. The law has resulted in a loss of revenue for many states. (Expected to raise \$95 million)

Closing of the Passive Investment Company loophole (also known as the Geoffrey the Giraffe loophole)- This "loophole," or exemption, allowed companies to transfer profits they made in NY to companies in other states so they could avoid paying NYS corporate taxes. Closing the loophole means those corporations will pay taxes in New York for

profits they make in New York. (Expected to raise \$85 million)

The Legislature also adopted budget provisions that disproportionately affect low and middle income New Yorkers:

Sales Tax Increase: The sales tax was increased by .25% and the exemption on clothing and footwear purchases under \$110 was eliminated. (Expected to raise \$500 million)

Tuition Increases: Tuition at State Universities of NY will increase \$950, less than the \$1,200 that the Governor proposed.

Cuts in welfare spending: Cuts were enacted including a \$1.6 million cut in funding for the HPNAP program for emergency food.

About \$2 billion was restored to the state budget because of this raising of revenue – primarily to prevent cuts in education, health care and social services.

According to Comptroller Hevesi, the state will likely face a \$4-6 billion deficit for the next budget year.

There are still many loopholes that exist and our tax system still favors corporations and very wealthy individuals!

What Happened to Other Issues We Were Working On?

The Budget took a long time to resolve and left little time to spend on other important issues. Issues such as the expiration of Rent Laws and revision of the Rockefeller Drug Laws were other hot topics in this session that took much of the remaining time of items not related directly to the budget deficit.

Basic Education Bill - A. 6503, S. 4626
This bill would have enabled welfare recipients to engage in essential basic educational activities including adult literacy, English as a second language, and GED preparation.

The bill passed the Assembly during the last week of the session. On the Senate side, the bill never moved out of the Social Services Committee. The chair of the committee did not provide the same level of leadership on the bill this year as he had last year to get the bill out of committee.

College Bill - A. 7894, S. 2856. The college bill would have allowed welfare recipients to attend college as part of their work requirement. The College bill never moved out of the Social Services Committees in both houses of the New York Legislature.

Empire State Jobs Bill - A. 8276. This bill would have established a transitional employment program that would lead to unsubsidized permanent jobs in the private and public sectors. It would have provided relevant job skills, education and training at a time when New Yorkers need them most.

The ESJ was reintroduced in the Assembly Labor Committee with no additional movement. The bill was not reintroduced in the Senate.

We have a lot of work ahead of us for the 2004 Legislative Session - New Yorkers need living wage jobs, access to education and training, and a tax system that is fair.

Hunger Action will be working on these issues and needs your help!

Faces...from p. 1

ter—providing GED programs, day care, parent training and on-the-job training for parents needing skills. For all this work, she was also designated as a recipient of the “Florida’s Finest” award in 1994.”

Leigh befell some very difficult times in the late 1990’s. She became very ill from a variety of pulmonary sicknesses. She could not work and her support system could only take her so far. In some of the reflections she has written for HANNYS, she has mentioned the internal struggles she encountered in becoming poor and feeling helpless after being such an active advocate.

She writes, “Going hungry was miserable, but the shame I felt for *being* hungry was worse. The hungrier I got, the more isolated I became because I was so ashamed. Worse still, it seemed I was trapped by poverty, by hunger, and by bitterness...Hunger brought me up hard against the darker side of the American Dream that said I *was* less because now I *had* less.” Leigh says she found in her a strength to “stand up to all the messages, some internal and some from without, that diminished me” and was able to turn to kitchens, pantries, and PA to get her back on her feet.

Leigh’s experiences have made her truly passionate about fighting hunger and poverty in our society and we at HANNYS have been blessed that she has chosen us to be one of her outlets for activism. Unfortunately, Leigh’s health has again taken a turn for the worse, and she is currently in a nursing home in Brooklyn. Please keep her in your thoughts and join us in our hopes that Leigh uses her fighting spirit to fully recover from her health problems.

Annual Meeting Agenda

The annual meeting will be at the Family Partnership Center, 29 N. Hamilton St., Poughkeepsie. There is a suggested registration fee of \$10 per individuals, \$15 for organization, which includes lunch.

Agenda

9:30 Welcome

9:45 Membership Meeting

- * Vote on Board of Directors
- * Overview on Hunger Action’s work in 2003
- * Presentation on HANNYS’ Strategic Plan

11:00 Lunch

Break out into Regional roundtables to discuss Strategic Plan, local hunger/poverty issues, what members can do locally to help

- * Membership “speak-out”

Noon: Keynote Speaker

Prof. Stanley Aronowitz will discuss his books “How Class Works” and “Implicating Empire: Globalization and Resistance in the 21st Century”

1:00 Afternoon Workshops

A. Revenue campaign - The workshop focuses on the problem of State and Local budget deficits and the effect of our state’s tax policies on each of us and on our communities. The workshop explains the NY State budget, reasons for the current economic crisis, the potential impacts of service cuts, the unfairness of the present tax system, and the alternative revenue options available.

B. Key issues in Economic Security: Public Assistance grant, job creation, living/ minimum wage. Updates on key organizing issues for 2004.

C. Local innovative food projects. Find out about progressive community food projects that build stronger communities, while bringing nourishment and providing economic benefits to low-income people. Info on current projects in NYS, including Community gardens and low-income Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs

D. Fundraising in difficult economic times - Not for profit organizations are finding it more and more difficult to do effective fundraising in today’s tight economy. Share information on grant resources and grant writing, Board fundraising, development, holding successful fundraisers and other funding sources.

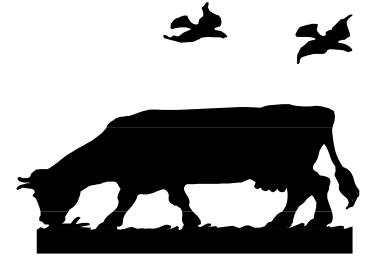
E. Advocacy Skills: How to’s for impacting policy. Getting your clients involved in advocacy and getting your message out

2:30 Membership social/networking time

3:15 End of Membership Meeting



Green Space



Thanksgiving Action Against Hunger!

Join this year's Thanksgiving Action Against Hunger slated for Monday, November 24, 2003. The goal of this state-wide event is to raise awareness about hunger and poverty related issues. Low-income individuals, students, advocates, concerned citizens, and faith groups across the state coordinate various activities in their communities to educate

both the public and elected officials. Last year, over 45 groups participated in the event by holding letter-writing campaigns, food drives, press conferences, legislator volunteer days at pantries, and letters to the editor. These activities not only highlighted hunger, but lead to sorely needed food donations to pantries. Help make the Thanksgiving Action a success



this year and lend your support by co-sponsoring an event in your area. Contact Hunger Action to sign up.

Harvest Donations

Hunger Action urges gardeners and concerned citizens across the state to donate extra vegetables to a local food pantry. Many emergency food programs are overburdened with an increasing number of people coming to them for assistance. A harvest donation is a welcome addition to a pantry's food supply, not to mention a rare site as canned items are often standard fare at most pantries. For those who have not planted a garden as of yet, it is still possible to plant a fall crop for donation such as collard greens, spinach, beets, parsnips, radishes and broccoli. To find a food pantry or soup kitchen near you, contact Hunger Action.



Some Farmer Markets Get EBTs

"Farmers' markets improve the nutrition of America's low-income persons by making fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs available," announced Eric M. Bost of USDA to announce the introduction of 60 wireless EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) terminals in western New York farmers' markets.

Wireless, handheld EBT terminals have restored the ability of farmers and vendors to make sales to Food Stamp customers at open-air farmers' markets that lack electricity needed for the standard EBT equipment.

The importance of this initiative cannot be over emphasized given that in New York State, 1.43 million people in 721,000 low-income households benefit from \$140 million in monthly Food Stamps to support their purchase of food for home

consumption. The 60 new EBT terminals in four western New York cities (Rochester, Buffalo, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda), as well as several additional cities, will supplement the existing 40 EBT terminals already in use at multiple farmers' markets throughout New York City. Participating farmers are easily identified with a "We Gladly Accept EBT" sign. Many farmers in NY however are still unable to accept EBT.

Outreach is still needed to inform New Yorkers in NYC and Western New York that they can now use their benefits to purchase food at farmers' markets. Contact Hunger Action or the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (<http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/>) for posters or brochures that promote the use of Food Stamps at farmers' markets.

Go Healthy, Go Organic

The Benefits of Organic Food

Hunger Action Network Community Food staff link organic food with communities in need through gardens, connecting local farmers and low income people, and promoting farmers' markets. The word "organic" is all over the media these days, and you may even be lucky enough to have an organic farmer living near you. What makes organic food such an essential part of improving New Yorkers' nutrition? Organic food promotes health, be it in the soil or in the bodies of folks who eat it.

For contrast, take a look at how most food is grown in the United States today. Nearly all the fruits and vegetables purchasable in grocery stores and supermarkets are grown by "conventional" methods. Unfortunately, "conventional" agriculture involves the use of synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides. This results in fruits and vegetables that contain less nutrients while they carry an uninvited load of pesticide residues and cause environmental harm in their production.

The difference between organic and conventionally grown food's nutrients is undeniable. One study found that organically grown apples, potatoes, pears, wheat, and sweet corn on average had "averaged 63% higher in calcium, 78% higher in chromium, 73% higher in iron, 118% higher in magnesium, 178% higher in molybdenum, 91% higher in phosphorus, 125% higher in potassium and 60% higher in zinc" than the same grown conventionally. When fruits and vegetables are grown conventionally, the use of fertilizers makes the plant grow, but it fails to feed the soil. If plants are grown in a



field year after year with no trace elements (i.e. calcium, iron, magnesium...) or organic matter added, such as compost or decomposed manure, the fruits and vegetables grown from that land lack essential vitamins and minerals.

What do you get in conventional foods that you don't get in organic food? In the same study, conventionally grown foods had 29% more mercury content. Pesticide residues are another common problem. Once applied, some of the pesticides remain on many common foods, such as apples, spinach, potatoes, strawberries and peaches. Purchasing these foods from local organic farmers and gardens can result in lower incidence of cancers, and a healthier community and economy.

Many of these chemicals persist in the environment long enough to cause negative health impacts to water ways or to

the air, harming wildlife and people who live or work nearby, so buying local, organically grown food protects environmental health as well. For more information, visit "Foods You'll Want to Buy Organic" at <http://www.foodnews.org/highpesticidefoods.php>

Organic food production strives to nourish soil, and as a byproduct, healthful foods. Are you ready to bite? Hunger Action Network is available to help you connect with organic food resources in your community. For example, farmers markets run through October in many regions of New York State. You may notice farmers at a market who have beautiful food but do not have a formal organic certification from the USDA. These farmers may still be using "organic" methods; Get to know your farmer by asking them if they grow food free of chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

If you are interested in creating an innovative project in the coming year that connects low-income people with organic produce, contact Hunger Action to learn about your options. Go Organic!

Fit for Food at Thanksgiving

Hunger Action Network's Fit for Food exercise-athon is a way for people to support our work by pledging to exercise during the week of Thanksgiving. You can go to the health club that you already belong to and get your friends and family to support your efforts by making a pledge.

The objectives of Fit for Food are to raise public awareness about hunger in our

communities—including promoting access to nutritious fruits and vegetables for low-income families—and to raise funds to support Hunger Action Network's work to end hunger.

The event is a call especially to those who are health conscience and to the health community to learn more about the risk of hunger and of poor nutrition to low-income families.

HANNYS Funds Innovative Food Projects

As part of the Vitagrants (Indirect Vitamins Purchasers Antitrust Litigation Settlement) it received through the State Attorney General's office, Hunger Action is funding seven community food model projects. (Info about applying for the second round is below)

Community security means members of a community having reliable access to nutritious, culturally acceptable food through local non-emergency sources. HANNYS is funding groups ranging from members of neighborhood associations to farmers to faith-based service workers in all parts of the State to connect low income people with local and affordable organic vegetables .

The Northside Food Network, in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, has teamed with the Dilmun Hills Student Organic Farm to make Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares accessible to the low income community of Ithaca's Northside Neighborhood. CSA communities purchase a "share" of a farmers' production for the season, receiving a box of fresh organic vegetables each week and guaranteeing the farmer has stable demand for his or her harvest. Coordinator Meg Meixner is also teaming with local farmers to offer a reduced price sale of farmers' market produce in the community.

With a small HANNYS grant, the Wake Robin Farm is gleaning and delivering potatoes, onions, and a wide variety of other healthful vegetables to Onondaga County emergency food programs at an estimated value of \$7500. "With over 1000 CSAs in the USA, similar projects could potentially reach tens of thousands of the low-income families in our coun-

try in need of fresh produce," says Meg Schader of Wake Robin Farm, whose goal is that this gleaning project be a model for other CSAs. In the US, 96 billion pounds of food end up in the waste stream each year because the food fails to reach those in need while it is still fresh.

Community food security coalitions, such as the Chenango County Hunger Coalition, come together to help ensure that New Yorkers have secure access to food. A partner in the coalition, Chenango County Catholic Charities, is organizing a local food buying cooperative, called Bullthistle Bounty. Community members and tourists purchase coupons redeemable for locally grown produce, and also contribute funds to subsidize coupons for low income members of the community. Bullthistle Bounty

supports local growers while providing affordable food to the county's needy.

Hunger Action Network has additionally funded two community gardens through Chautauqua County Rural Ministry and Schoharie County Action Program. Hudson Guild of New York City and Future Farms in Chemung County are developing low income CSA projects. HANNYS is working with these groups to improve local food systems and ensure equal access to nutritious food regardless of income.

These projects serve as alternatives to traditional food retail markets and are a community-based source of healthful food and economic development. Our staff is available to help groups duplicate alternative food projects in their communities.

Oct. 30 Deadline for Grants

Attention innovative community folks and organizations! Do you have an idea for a project that addresses hunger and increases access to nutritious food in your community?

Hunger Action Network is accepting requests for funding of innovative food projects that benefit low-income New Yorkers until Oct. 30, 2003.

Some examples of potential projects include Community Supported Agriculture projects, community gardens, rooftop and container gardening, food rescue/gleaning programs, and food buying clubs. The average grant will be \$5000, with a total of \$60,000 to be awarded through two grant cycles. In developing your

project, keep in mind that we are unable to fund applicants who request funds for expansion of food pantries, or nutrition education without increasing access to nutritious food. Non-profit 501(c)(3) status is not required, but eligible organizations must work with low-income, homeless, or hungry populations or develop community resources to assist those populations.

If you'd like to learn more about potential projects or need an application, please contact Susannah Pasquantonio in NYC at 212-741-8192 ext 3# or Liz Wagner or Sheila McCarthy in Albany at 518/434-7371. The application is also available to download at our web site: www.hungeractionnys.org

Doctors Call for Single Payer Health Care

The issue of a single payer universal health care system has been put back on the table by more than 8,000 doctors.

It is estimated that if NY was to adopt a single payer system, such as the one annually proposed by Assembly Chair Richard Gottfried, New York would save more than \$5 billion - enough to pay to expand health care to the 3 million New Yorkers who lack health care coverage.

Over the last decade, state legislative efforts have become bogged down in various proposals that at best incrementally expand health care coverage. Many advocates in New York are no longer willing to seriously lobby for universal health care. A modest proposal to allocate some state funds to do a cost-benefit analysis of the various ways that New York could create a universal health care system received no consideration this year when the legislature did the biennial renewal of the Health Care Reform Act which determines how the state will allocate its billions of health care dollars.

Here is the **Executive Summary of the Physicians Working Group for Single-Payer National Health Insurance**. You can see the full proposal at www.physiciansproposal.org/

The United States spends more than twice as much on health care as the average of other developed nations, all of which boast universal coverage. Yet over 39 million Americans have no health insurance whatsoever, and most others are underinsured, in the sense that they lack adequate coverage for all contingencies (e.g., long-term care and prescription drug costs).

Why is the U. S. so different? The short answer is that we alone treat health care as a commodity distributed according to the ability to pay, rather than as a social service to be distributed according to medical need.

In our market-driven system, investor-owned firms compete not so much by increasing quality or lowering costs, but by avoiding unprofitable patients and shifting costs back to patients or to other payers. This creates the paradox of a health care system based on avoiding the sick. It generates huge administrative costs, which, along with profits, divert resources from clinical care to the demands of business.

In addition, burgeoning satellite businesses, such as consulting firms and marketing companies, consume an increasing fraction of the health care dollar.



We endorse a fundamental change in America's health care - the creation of a comprehensive National Health Insurance (NHI) Program.

Such a program - which in essence would be an expanded and improved version of Medicare - would cover every American for all necessary medical care. Most hospitals and clinics would remain privately owned and operated, receiving a budget from the NHI to cover all operating costs. Investor-owned fa-

cilities would be converted to not-for-profit status, and their former owners compensated for past investments. Physicians could continue to practice on a fee-for-service basis, or receive salaries from group practices, hospitals or clinics.

A National Health Insurance Program would save at least \$150 billion annually by eliminating the high overhead and profits of the private, investor-owned insurance industry and reducing spending for marketing and other satellite services.

Doctors and hospitals would be freed from the concomitant burdens and expenses of paperwork created by having to deal with multiple insurers with different rules - often rules designed to avoid payment.

During the transition to an NHI, the savings on administration and profits would fully offset the costs of expanded and improved coverage. NHI would make it possible to set and enforce overall spending limits for the health care system, slowing cost growth over the long run.

A National Health Insurance Program is the only affordable option for universal, comprehensive coverage. Under the current system, expanding access to health care inevitably means increasing costs, and reducing costs inevitably means limiting access. But an NHI could both expand access and reduce costs. It would squeeze out bureaucratic waste and eliminate the perverse incentives that threaten the quality of care and the ethical foundations of medicine.

Welfare Shelter Grant Hikes in Nov.

As of November 1, 2003, most welfare participants will be seeing small increases in their monthly shelter allowances. This is part of the state's effort to resolve the decades-old Jiggetts lawsuit on the adequacy of the public assistance shelter payments.

The increases, which only apply to households with children, vary widely between counties and according to family size, and still fall far short of meeting actual need. In New York City, the monthly shelter allowance for a family of three for instance will increase from \$286 to \$400, an increase of \$114, while Monroe County will see no increase,

staying at \$343. Albany County will increase \$64 up to \$309; Onondaga \$33 to \$303; Westchester \$65 to \$426; and Nassau \$61 to \$445.

The proposed regulations abolish the distinction between rent with and without heat, though those without heat will get a utility allowance.

Households presently receiving higher shelter payments pursuant to a court order on Jiggetts will continue to receive the higher payment for 2 years, provided that there is no break in assistance of more than one calendar month, or that the family has not been sanctioned.

The new regulations also do away with different shelter payments based on whether or not a child is present. However, local counties have the option of providing an additional shelter supplement to families who are on PA and reside in private housing.

Since the revised regulations are still inadequate to provide families with children with adequate housing, legal service advocates will still pursue court action under Jiggetts to win higher payments. A copy of the new shelter schedule is at http://www.otda.state.ny.us/featured/new/jiggetts_Reg_Falco_Revision_1_22_03.pdf

HUNGER ACTION NETWORK OF NEW YORK STATE MEMBERSHIP COUPON

____ Yes, I want to help end the root causes of hunger by becoming a member:

____ \$30 Individual

____ \$5 (low/fixed income)

____ \$40 Small Organization

____ \$75 Medium Organization

____ \$150 Large Organization

Name _____ Organization _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (DayTime) _____ (Evening) _____ (Email) _____

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