

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT/ PROGRAM/ EVENT:

Note: Any program since last year's deadline is eligible.

Category: (Please circle or highlight the category for which this program is being submitted.)

- Women – Education – Community – International – Cultural – Diversity – Public Policy

Title: Accessing Affordable NYS Healthcare

Part I:

(X) Other community groups involved, if any (list):(5 points)

NYS Department of Health's Office of Health Insurance Programs and Health Bureau, Schenectady Schools, Ellis Health Center; underinsured public

(X) Number of members involved in planning or putting on the program (5 points) 10

(X) Number of nonmembers involved in the program (5 points) **unable to determine**
how many families will participate at this date, school personnel, two speakers

(X) Number of members who attended or benefitted (5 points) **undetermined until March 17**

(X) Number of nonmembers who attended or benefitted (5 points) **undetermined until March 17**

(X) Number of new members who joined (if any)(5 points) **cannot determine now**

Part II:

Describe your project/ program/ event in 75-150 words. Be sure to include:

(X) how the project addressed AAUW's mission (15 points)

(X) branch goals in doing this program (10 points)

(X) specific action steps in planning this program (15 points)

(X) steps taken for community visibility (Attach newsletter and newspaper articles.)(10 points)

(X) measurable impact on the community (10 points)

(X) lessons learned for future programs/ projects/ events (10 points)

Attach copies of newsletter and newspaper articles about this project/ program/ event.

(No more than 4 pages maximum)

Mail or email the original of your entire application with supporting materials to:

- Peggy Kelland, AAUW-NYS Program Vice President

- 13 Susan Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

smkell45@aol.com

Questions? (845)297-0507

Accessing Affordable Healthcare in NYS

One of our original planning goals was to focus on healthcare, especially for woman and children. Three of our programs this year spotlight this topic, although only one of them will take place prior to April 1. The other two, *Women's Health Issues* and *Women Leaders in Medicine* will occur in mid-April and June.

Let us highlight the event that we will be sponsoring this March. Without a doubt, a concern for adequate health care is part of AAUW's mission. Last summer, as a result of our working relationship with the schools, we were contacted by a representative of Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus, insurance programs offered by NYS. With her shocking news that 2800 children in Schenectady are underinsured or uninsured, we decided to take action to rectify this situation. As we learned more, we also discovered that many women, although employed and ineligible for Medicaid, are also unable to pay for health insurance and their families go without adequate coverage. We are sponsoring a very far-reaching program on March 17 to which the public is invited to learn about programs offered by NYS at no or low cost. The evening will feature a representative from the Dept. of Health's Insurance Programs, Kelly Hull, who will open the attendees' eyes to affordable coverage. The second half of the program will present Cathy Sheehan, Assistant Attorney General (a speaker at the AAUW NYS Convention last April) who will address how to overcome the pitfalls when navigating through our complicated healthcare system.

We've publicized this event like none other! Our Branch sent letters to sixteen principals of the Schenectady Schools and enclosed an information packet. In it was a cover page to explain our rationale, a colored flyer to post, and black and white copies to distribute to individuals. (All are attached.) We also emailed a copy of our flyer to each Branch member and asked that she share it. We sent email flyers to representatives of all the service organizations in the area that work with the needy. We posted flyers in the community (libraries, town halls) and distributed publicity to the Ellis Health Center, the facility that provides medical care to families in our area who are uninsured or underinsured.

We hope there will be a good turnout on March 17. For those families who cannot attend, we have created links so they can still access the information they need. Our Branch has also initiated a working relationship between the Ellis Health Center and Child Health Plus to work together to enroll families in insurance programs when children are registered for kindergarten. There is potential for AAUW members to become facilitators in assisting the families with the completion of the very involved insurance application process. Are we impacting the community? Definitely! Service to our community is a primary goal of the Schenectady Branch and it is certainly worth the effort.

What have we learned? The more we become involved in our community, the more partnerships we forge with other organizations. And from each relationship can spin another worthwhile project for us. We will make sure to continue and expand these alliances in the future.

References to Accessing NYS Healthcare in *Visions*, our newsletter

cerpt from Sept.

Residents' Notes

We were contacted by the Dept. of Health and asked to be an advocate for Child Health Plus, a health plan that provides coverage for women, children, and families who are underinsured or without health insurance. One of our three healthcare programs this coming year, *Accessing Affordable NYS Healthcare*, will be devoted to helping to remedy this situation.

cerpt from Feb.

Diversity Study and Interest Group

February 15, 2010

6:30 PM

Everyone is WELCOME!

This month's Diversity meeting will be held in the conference room at the McClellan Campus of Ellis Medicine. A speaker from the hospital will describe the new directions for the former St. Clare's including the Medical Home (for primary and wellness care) and the relocated Ellis Center (Nursing home facility).

The meeting will be followed by a tour of the new Ellis Center which will open in the beginning of March. Refreshments will be provided by the staff of the hospital. All AAUW members and friends are invited to attend. Please register with Suzanne Taylor at 393-9035 or email popage@aol.com by February 10.

cerpt from March

Presidents' Notes

We are very excited about our upcoming March 17 program. Last year we were approached by a representative from the Office of Health Insurance Programs. She told us about ones offered by NYS, *Child Health Plus* and *Family Health Plus*. Any NYS resident can participate, but the beauty of them is that they are offered on a sliding fee scale. We have invited the public to this meeting and hope that those who are having difficulty securing affordable health coverage will attend. Also featured will be a woman who spoke at the AAUW NYS Convention last year. She will address hurdles we have all encountered as we dealt with the health care system. Please see the article on page 4 for more details about the speakers and their topics.

cerpt from March

March General Meeting

Our March 17 general meeting will be at the McChesney Room of the Main Schenectady Library at 7:00 P.M. Come join us for a very informative program on New York Healthcare.

Did you know that there are about 2800 uninsured children in the Schenectady Schools? Kelly Hull from the Office of Health Insurance Programs, part of the NYS Department of Health, is one of our two speakers. She will speak about

affordable NYS Health Insurance for the uninsured. Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus are two of the affordable health insurance programs for children and adults. She will present a summary of free and low-cost health insurance coverage which is available for children, adults, and families in NYS. At this meeting there will be applications available.

Cathy Young Sheehan, Assistant Attorney General, from the Healthcare Bureau of the NYS Office of the Attorney General, will also be speaking at this meeting. Health care fraud and abuse are some of the cases handled by the Healthcare Bureau

and Ms. Sheehan settled a case recovering \$27 million for New York State. Services provided through dedicated attorneys and advocates of the Health Care Bureau are free of charge. Ms. Sheehan's presentation "Navigating the Health Care System" will help us become more informed health care consumers. Come learn about what your rights are and what the Healthcare Bureau can do to help you get the health benefits you are entitled to.

Join us and hear about the health care services available to all of us living in NYS. Become a more informed health care consumer and learn about what your rights are. The general public is invited and refreshments will be served.

803 Dongan Ave.
Scotia, NY 12302
February 12, 2010

Dear Mr. Sardos:

We would like to extend an invitation to you, your staff, and the families in your school to join us on March 17 at 7:00 P.M. in the McChesney Room of the Schenectady Main Library, 99 Clinton Street. **ACCESSING NEW YORK HEALTHCARE** is a program being presented by AAUW Schenectady for the purpose of educating the people in our community about options for their health care. We have been informed that there are 2800 uninsured children in Schenectady, and many parents are either unfamiliar with or intimidated by the current coverage options. We ask that you consider distributing the enclosed material to your staff in the hopes that they may share the flyer with families who could most benefit. This presentation, based upon NYS Dept. of Health programs currently available, is open to the public at no charge.

Ms. Kelly Hull from the Office of Health Insurance programs will be speaking on NYS health insurance for children, adults and families. Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus, and Medicaid provide insurance coverage so children and families can receive the care they need through check-ups, hospital care, prescription medications, vaccinations, and doctor visits when they are ill. Dental visits and vision care are also covered under these plans. First, however, the uninsured must apply for insurance and Ms. Hull will provide information on how this can be done. Application forms will be available at this meeting.

In the second part of this program, Ms. Cathy Sheehan from the Healthcare Bureau of the NYS Office of the Attorney General, will provide tools for dealing with the hurdles families might encounter as they navigate through the health care system. What to do when a claim is refused and where to go if a current insurance is terminated are some of the issues she will address.

Having more familiarity with the rights and options of health care consumers will hopefully encourage uninsured or underinsured families to take advantage of the NYS programs in place. We appreciate any assistance you can provide in helping us to ensure that every child and family have access to the healthcare they deserve. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us about this program. Thank you.

Gerri Pinkerton

Gerri Pinkerton, Co-president
AAUW Schenectady
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Pam Haller

Pam Haller, Co-president
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399-8580 Haller915@aol.com

Enc. Packet includes:

Cover page for school nurse and social worker
colored flyer to post on community bulletin board
black and white flyer for distribution purposes

WHY?

Why is AAUW (American Association of University Women), Schenectady Branch, sponsoring a program on accessing health care? Last year our organization was approached by a representative of the NYS Office of Health Insurance Programs. She explained to us that many children and adults who are not Medicaid eligible, are either underinsured or uninsured. The irony of this situation is that there ARE insurance programs underwritten by NYS, such as Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus, that are very affordable or free. Many families, unfortunately, are not aware of this or are too intimidated by the application process to seek help.

AAUW members would like to help remedy this situation by providing the people lacking health insurance, the information to become better health care consumers. We are using every means available to publicize the informational program on the attached flyer. One of our primary concerns is to educate parents about securing adequate health coverage for the 2,800 children in Schenectady who are not adequately insured. That explains our attempt to coordinate with you, the professionals, working with them.

We have provided two flyers. If you would, the one in color could be posted on a community bulletin board where parents would be likely to see it. We have also provided a black and white flyer which you may distribute to specific families who have particular health coverage needs.

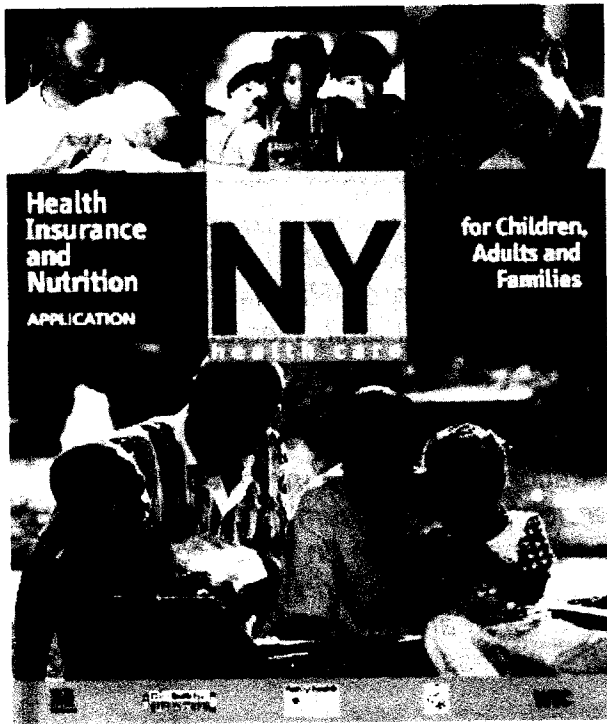
In addition to attendees hearing about the affordable coverage available (and completing an application if they choose), they will also be given some guidelines on how to navigate through the health care system when they encounter a hurdle. We appreciate any help you can give us to encourage your families to attend this program. Should some parents be interested but not be able to attend, if you contact us, we can provide you with information about accessing health care coverage that you can share with them.

We certainly appreciate any assistance you can give to help us remove some of the roadblocks families face in obtaining and managing the health coverage to which they are entitled. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you.

*Geri Pinkerton, Co-President
AAUW Schenectady
346-4560 gpinkerton@nycap.rr.com*

*Pam Haller, Co-President
AAUW Schenectady
399-8580 Haller915@aol.com*

Mailed with the flyer to 16 principals of the Schenectady schools; emailed to 96 Branch members along with 25 contacts of other organizations in community; cover page and 75 copies of flyer to Ellis Health Center



*Presented by the Schenectady
Branch of AAUW*

Accessing New York Healthcare

7:00 p.m.

*Wednesday, March 17
McChesney Room
Schenectady Main Library*

Affordable NYS Health Insurance for the Underinsured

Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus

Summary of free and low-cost health insurance coverage to eligible children, adults, and families in NYS. Application and links to facilitators will be available.

**Speaker: Kelly Hull, Office of Health Insurance Programs
NYS Department of Health**

Navigating the Health Care System

A Guide to the Optimal Utilization of the Current System

*What your rights are; What to do if you lose your current insurance;
Ten most important things you should know as a health care consumer*

**Speaker: Cathy Sheehan, Assistant Attorney General
NYS Health Bureau**

Free Admission

Public invited