

# Single Payer Health Care Plan Makes Sense to Brooklyn Group

By Craig McGuire

Hundreds of supporters of a single-payer national health care plan attended a rally on the steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall to commend the six Brooklyn Congressmembers who support the plan.

Democratic Representatives Jerrold Nadler, Charles Schumer, Edolphus Towns, Major Owens, Nydia Velazquez, and Carolyn Maloney are all co-sponsors of the McDermott/Conyers bill for a Canadian-style single-payer health care system.

Only Congresswoman Susan Molinari, a Republican, stands alone among Brooklyn lawmakers in Washington on the issue of health care reform.

On duty in Washington, none of the lawmakers was able to attend.

The major disparity between Presidents Bill Clinton's health care proposal and the single-payer plan is that under single-payer, the government would replace the more than 1,500 private health insurance companies.

To date, thousands of Brooklynites have signed petitions favoring HR 1200, the McDermott/Conyers single-payer health care bill.

"This is our way of letting our legislators know there is widespread public

"They do not have the rich lobbyists campaigning for them like the insurance companies, but I and the 90 other cosponsors are hearing them."

State legislators from Brooklyn also turned out at the rally to show solidarity for the single-payer plan.

"We can no longer continue to tell the world that we are the center of democracy and not provide universal health care," said State Assemblyman Frank

Barbaro. "Up until now, the only other major world power that lacked universal health care had been South Africa. But after the election of the African National Congress, I am sure that is about to change."

"We have to take a demonstration like this and multiply it by tens of thousands across the country," urged Barbaro.

State Assemblyman James Brennan agreed, "We have to do everything

we can to help push this legislation through on both the federal and state level."

Brennan and Barbaro are co-sponsors of a similar single-payer bill in Albany.

Last month in California, 1,043,146 petitioners succeeded in getting a state single-payer plan on their ballot for November.

Lawmakers and community leaders are not the only ones who felt compelled to join the fray. Members of various diverse groups

across the spectrum of Brooklyn society have lashed themselves to the single-payer movement.

"As a particularly vulnerable segment of society we are concerned that we will not receive adequate coverage," said Edith Garshman, president of the Brooklyn Chapter of the Older Women's League. "We will only accept a universal, comprehensive, federally-funded and administered health care plan."

"The biggest threat to both patients and doctors are the insurance companies," said Bernard Levy, a Brooklyn resident and practicing physician. "How any citizen cannot support the single-payer plan is incomprehensible."

Brooklyn Single Payer Network, comprised of more than 30 Brooklyn organizations, is participating with Single Payer Across the Nation, a coalition of thousands of groups.

*Bayley Seton Hospital offers coordinated health care services for people with HIV at*

## The Dr. Richard Bayley Center for HIV Care

**"Holistic Care in a Confidential Setting"**

The Dr. Richard Bayley Center for HIV Care offers comprehensive outpatient HIV primary care at Bayley Seton Hospital and at the Port Richmond Health Center.

To qualify for treatment in this program, patients must be

