

# One Vision, One Voice:

Health Access for All



## Access to Care: Need Goes On, Our Commitment Continues

It is hard to believe the Upper Peninsula Health Access Coalition is now approaching its seventh year of existence. Although a number of things have changed since UPHAC was formed in 2004, the vision of facilitating access to health care for U.P. residents remains the same.

At any given time, our partner coalitions serving the 15 counties of the region are serving thousands of people who would have nowhere else to turn for their medical needs. In a geographic area with a total population of around 300,000, a total client population of 2,000 to 3,000 clients is significant. The cost of care for one uninsured person who goes years without treatment for a condition can be staggering when they end up in the emergency room with an acute illness. That care can cost tens of thousands of dollars, and our hospital systems and physicians may never see payment for services. Multiply that by the number of individuals who are uninsured and the dollar figures are scary.

While the need for our services has remained a constant, there have been a number of variables since 2004. The political climate probably tops that list of changes. A new presidential administration in 2008 led to the passage of a highly controversial health care reform bill. What followed was continued debate and a number of changes in the 2010 elections at the federal and state levels where seats held by Democrats changed hands to Republicans. States spanning the Great Lakes are all led by Republican governors for the first time in decades. State revenue sharing dollars are tighter than ever, and balancing budgets at the state, county and municipal levels while providing adequate programs and services has become increasingly difficult.

Call me an optimist, but I do not think things are all gloom and doom. Panicking is easy...surviving and sustaining is the hard part. Despite a number of things being out of our control for years, our partner coalitions across the U.P. have continued to plug along and provide health care access to people who are uninsured in their communities. We continue to make a difference in peoples' lives every day. We have been threatened by change in the past and have persevered through it.

As UPHAC Board President Bill Reid — a veteran of these kinds of challenges — believes, "We stand on solid footing, grounded in compassion and commitment to serve local needs of our neighbors and friends to access health care. That is, above all, our guiding principle."

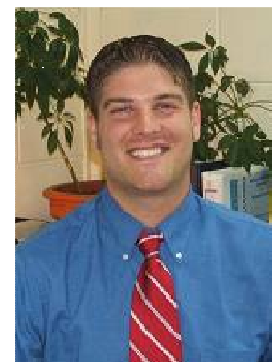
Some new and exciting things going on in the region include the implementation of a new electronic database to track our patient population and provide better reporting into the future. We are also looking for niche opportunities for our coalitions through health care reform and other avenues. This also marks the 5<sup>th</sup> year for our annual "Hero for the Uninsured" Awards (see more information in this newsletter), which is a great event that helps us celebrate all of the good things going on across the region. If you have attended, you know what I'm talking about. If you haven't, you should...and you should also bring a friend!

We have a lot to be proud of, and I am sure 2011 will be a great year for UPHAC and our local coalitions across the Upper Peninsula as we continue to find our path moving forward. Thanks to all of our partners: local and regional board members and staff, volunteer physicians, hospitals, pharmacies, U.P. Association of Rural Health Services clinics, county government, elected officials, health departments, the Upper Peninsula Health Plan, local community volunteers, and the list goes on and on...

*Benji Wood*

*Executive Director*

*UPHAC*



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## 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GALA TO RECOGNIZE 'HERO FOR THE UNINSURED' AWARDEES

U.P. Health Access Coalition's fifth annual **"Hero for the Uninsured" Awards** program will again recognize special contributions that have opened doors to health care services and prescription medications for uninsured Upper Peninsula residents.

A celebratory dinner is scheduled May 19 at Upfront & Company in Marquette by UPHAC in cooperation with community health care providers and local Access Coalitions of the U.P. which help sponsor the event. The dinner will also recognize the late Richard Imm, MD, who was one of the founding champions of the Western U.P. Healthcare Access Coalition (WUPHAC) and a long-time UPHAC board member.

UPHAC has issued the "last call" for nominations for 2011 **"Hero for the Uninsured" Award** candidates to meet the March 11 deadline to honor deserving individuals, medical providers and programs that help make health care, prescription medications and medical services accessible to U.P. residents regardless of ability to pay.

Nominators may recommend individuals, institutions, organizations and/or programs that:

- Demonstrate exceptional effort in providing access to care for uninsured U.P. residents, either in a singular event or ongoing work.
- Make exemplary sustained and/or new contributions toward the goal of achieving 100 percent access to health care in the U.P.
- Provide special efforts in direct care services, program outreach and emphasis on dignity in care to Local Access Coalition patient-enrollees or the U.P. uninsured population in general.
- Create/implement new or innovative ideas and/or programs that support the cause of access-to-health-care for uninsured U.P. residents.

Nominations may be made by UPHAC partners and the general public. A simple "Hero" nomination form available on-line at [www.uphealthaccess.org](http://www.uphealthaccess.org) may be submitted electronically; copies are also available from the UPHAC (906.233.0210 or [uphac@uphealthaccess.org](mailto:uphac@uphealthaccess.org)).

**"Hero for the Uninsured" Award** dinner details and registration forms will be sent out in March; dinner tickets are \$30 per person.

### 2007-2010 Hero for the Uninsured Awardees

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War Memorial Hospital of Sault Ste. Marie (2007),</li> <li>• OSF St. Francis Hospital of Escanaba (2007),</li> <li>• James Hubbard, MD, of Ironwood (2009),</li> <li>• Catherine Kroll, DO, of Gwinn (2010),</li> <li>• Northwoods Airlifeline of Kingsford (2009),</li> <li>• The Corporation for National and Community Service's Michigan Office (2009),</li> <li>• Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital of Manistique (2008),</li> <li>• Portage Health System's Financial Assistance Program of Hancock (2007),</li> <li>• U.P. Association of Rural Health Services (2007),</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dickinson County Healthcare System's Patient Assistance Program of Iron Mountain (2008),</li> <li>• Sault Community Pharmacy of Sault Ste. Marie (2009),</li> <li>• St. Vincent de Paul Society of Escanaba and Gladstone (2009),</li> <li>• Emerald City Dental Center of Manistique (2010),</li> <li>• Care Free Dental Clinic of Escanaba (2008),</li> <li>• Medical Arts Medical Center of Houghton (2008),</li> <li>• Downtown Eye Care of Marquette (2010),</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TDS Pharmacies of Dickinson County (2007),</li> <li>• Medical Care Access Coalition Clinic director Kevin Piggott, MD, of Marquette (2007),</li> <li>• Martha Short, MD, with Melissa Broeders, PA, and Cathy Paquette, LPN, all of Marquette (2008),</li> <li>• Lynn Kihm, CNE, of Newberry (2010),</li> <li>• Teresa Kowalski, FNP, of Dafer (2008) and</li> <li>• Community volunteers Ruthann Davey of Calumet (2007), Connie Diller of Gulliver (2009), Jeannette Hauver of Marquette (2007), Faith Laken of Gwinn (2009) and Matthew Bixby (2010).</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

**'A Healthier U.P. – One Hero at a Time'**

### Coalitions to Receive Technical Assistance from Michigan Nonprofit Association

Local Access Coalitions will be the beneficiaries of a **"Recover Michigan"** technical assistance award to UPHAC in January from the Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA).

Between March and May, local coalition board members and senior staff will attend a special session in their home community on governance practices and procedures for nonprofit organizations. Amy Quinn, Vice President of the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development, will provide consultation services for each session, which will be tailored to individual coalitions' needs.



The assistance will culminate in May with a regional review of network needs and potential development steps for the future, according to Benjamin Wood, UPHAC Executive Director.

The award of 25 hours of consultation services will also qualify UPHAC to apply to MNA in late May for **"Recover Michigan"** funding to assist coalitions in institutionalizing board development materials and policies resulting from the training.

**"Recover Michigan,"** which involves organizations statewide, is federally funded under the authority of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 – Strengthening Communities Fund (SCF). It helps nonprofit organizations to position themselves to strengthen their effectiveness to address broad economic recovery issues present in their communities.

MNA is a Lansing-based organization whose activities focus on increasing the capacity of the state's nonprofits to serve, strengthen and transform communities.

## VISTA Volunteers Make a Difference!

Five UPHAC Project VISTA members who served at four coalition offices during 2010 were personally involved in leveraging more than \$1,145,000 in prescription assistance applications (PAPs) and other health care services for program enrollees and/or community members as part of total benefits generated by coalition programs in the Upper Peninsula. In the last six months of 2010 alone, four of the VISTAs accounted for a total of \$759,240 in PAP medications acquired from pharmaceutical companies, nearly doubling the PAPs coordinated by VISTAs for the first half of the year.

VISTA members who contributed to the welfare of U.P. residents' access to health care and toward meeting the Corporation for National and Community Service's "Healthy Futures" goal of improving access to primary and preventative health care included:

- Former Medical Access Coalition (MAC) VISTA Ashlee Valavala, whose service year ended in early February, 2010;
- Former Medical Care Access Coalition (Alger County) VISTA Laura Lewinski, who concluded her service at the end of August, 2010, to join the MCAC staff;
- Third-year VISTA Rhea Menza at Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition; and
- First-year VISTAs Debra Calouette at MAC's Escanaba office and Kristine Axtell at MAC's Menominee office.

## Day of Service activity extends VISTAs' reach across globe

The big numbers don't end with VISTAs' everyday activities at coalition offices.

This year for the Martin Luther King Jr. "Day of Service" observance January 17, UPHAC VISTA Project members collaborated across county lines with the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs of Menominee, Delta and Dickinson counties (another National Service program) to gather "Valentines for Military Heroes" and hosted public Valentine-making events in Menominee, Escanaba and Iron Mountain on MLK Day.

When the project wrapped up, they had collected more than 5,000 Valentine cards and messages of appreciation from schoolchildren, senior citizens, service organizations and the general public which were sent to deployed U.P. military personnel and to service veterans in Veterans Administration facilities in the U.P.

Not bad for their first "Day of Service" effort!

UPHAC VISTA member Nicole Gearhart coordinated planning for the project and saw it through to the end, shipping overseas packages at the end of January and sending hundreds of well-wishes to veterans in time for the February 14 holiday. She and MAC VISTA Deb Calouette were responsible for raising more than \$1,500 in cash and in-kind donations to support the project.

Responses were received from a few of the soldiers who got packages, and their words more than anything else showed the success of the "Valentines for Military Heroes" project.

Cory Simpson, a soldier from Lansing who is currently serving in Iraq, submitted the following message via the project's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/vfmh2011](http://www.facebook.com/vfmh2011)): "I just want to say thank you for all of the wonderful cards. I took time to read every single one of them. It means a whole lot knowing that you all support our efforts.

Hope all is well stateside!"

The following excerpt is from Gladstone native LTC William Weycker, Chief of Operations for the United States Army Africa in Vicenza Italy, who e-mailed after receiving two packages of Valentines: "I want to thank all the people from the U.P. that took the time to make valentines for soldiers as a part of the Valentines for Military Heroes, Community Service Project...The valentines brought many smiles and several chuckles from the Soldiers here...The Soldiers here work hard every day to prevent the spread of terrorism in Africa and deploy to austere regions of the continent, often in harm's way...every little bit helps and you have certainly helped to improve morale here."

More information about the "Valentines for Military Heroes" project can be found by clicking the link at the bottom of UPHAC's homepage ([www.uphealthaccess.org](http://www.uphealthaccess.org)).



People from throughout the U.P. lent a hand in making the "Valentines for Military Heroes" Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service project an overwhelming success. More than 5,000 Valentines were contributed to the project — about 4,000 were sent overseas to deployed military personnel, and the remaining cards were sent to U.P. veterans.



## Upper Peninsula Health Access Coalition

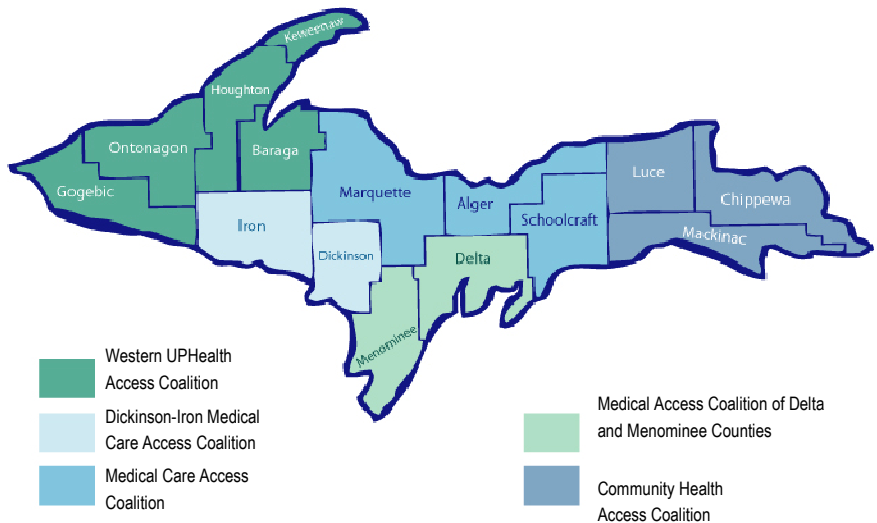
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Link to your local access coalition  
 at our website.

[www.UPHealthAccess.org](http://www.UPHealthAccess.org)



- UPHAC Board Members**
- Barb Chenier  
*Medical Access Coalition – Delta-Menominee*
  - Glenn Dobson, Treasurer  
*Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition*
  - Diane Gadomski, Secretary  
*Western U.P. Healthcare Access Coalition*
  - Donna Jaksic  
*U.P. Association of Rural Health Services*
  - Christine Lundquist, Vice President  
*Community Health Access Coalition*
  - Dale Moilanen  
*Medical Care Access Coalition*
  - Linda Piper  
*Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition*
  - Bill Reid, President  
*Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition*
  - Sandy Routhier  
*Community Health Access Coalition*
  - Don Simila  
*Western U.P. Healthcare Access Coalition*
  - Dennis Smith  
*Upper Peninsula Health Care Network*
  - Jim Wayne  
*Medical Access Coalition – Delta-Menominee*

### Coalition Highlights from Around the U.P.

**Community Health Access Coalition (CHAC)** has successfully nominated five partners in early 2011 to be highlighted as part of the *Spotlight Recognition Program of the United Way of the Eastern U.P.* Volunteer Clinic physician Timothy O'Connor, MD, of Sault Ste. Marie, and nurse practitioner Maureen O'Shea, FNP-BC, of Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, were recognized as Individual Volunteers in January and February. Fundraising partner Bruce Brown of Alpine Chocolat Haus in the Soo area was tapped as a Volunteer Business Neighbor in January for his support of CHAC's candy apple fundraiser.

The most recent volunteer support in the "Spotlight" recognized two Newberry groups in early March, the Goodfellows as Volunteer Organization and Newberry Bottling as Business Neighbor, for assisting CHAC in fulfilling its mission of service and support for the uninsured in the three eastern U.P. counties.

**Medical Care Access Coalition's Schoolcraft County** office has been designated as the "Charities" recipient of this year's Cancer Society-Bay Cliff-Charities (CBC) fundraiser in the county. CBC's community-wide activities, which include a telethon of public access entertainment and informational programming April 17, raise funds annually for local causes benefiting area residents. Funds donated to MCAC-Schoolcraft will go to client health care services, according to June Ann Smith, volunteer and enrollment coordinator. The CBC fundraiser has operated in the Manistique area for more than 40 years.

**Medical Care Access Coalition's Volunteer Clinic** will be offering an ongoing Medical Management Weight Loss program for clinic patients beginning March 18, with the assistance of medical students from Michigan State University and Erica Griffin, MD. The classes, taught by registered dietitians, will cover strategies for how to lose weight without spending money, food preparation tips and suggested exercise regimens.

Check out the two new on-line profiles of **Medical Access Coalition (MAC)** and **CHAC** on the UPHAC web site, [www.uphealthaccess.org](http://www.uphealthaccess.org). MAC's web pages – accessed by clicking on the regional map key on our home page or at <http://www.wix.com/macdmc/home> – highlight office locations, services and eligibility for their programs for uninsured Delta and Menominee county residents. UPHAC VISTA member Nicole Gearhart assisted in design and adding the pages to the UPHAC web site. CHAC's site – also accessible at <http://www.upchac.org/> -- received a 2011 makeover by a local student/techie from Summit Design and Web Development.

Since May 2010, **Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition (DIMCAC)** has been piloting a transportation program for medical and dental appointments. In 2010, the program provided rides for qualifying DIMCAC clients through North Transport, a locally owned family business which also provides contracted client transportation for Department of Human Services and Northpointe Behavioral Health System.

Startup funds were provided through the Dickinson-Iron Community Services Agency as part of an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant; DIMCAC is continuing the program as part of its direct services budget.

"We have several clients who are without reliable transportation and saw this gap as a need we could potentially fill," according to Benjamin Wood, DIMCAC Executive Director. "It has worked out very well so far. People let us know when they need a ride, and we coordinate it with North Transport. We are fortunate to be able to offer this service, and it has been a big hit with our clientele who utilize it.

"We feel the investment to date of just over \$3,000 has been well worth it to serve dozens of people who would probably go without care otherwise."