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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

8th U.P. HEALTH ACCESS COALITION'S FALL CONFERENCE OCT. 8

***'Health Care in the U.P. Today...and the Road to Tomorrow'* to Focus
on Political, Economic Environment for Patients, Care Providers, Services**

ESCANABA – In 2009, health care reform is a topic on everyone's mind. While lawmakers craft and debate the specifics of health care legislation they plan to pass this fall, a growing number of citizens in U.S. communities continue to grapple with the everyday challenges of accessing and affording the medical treatments and prescriptions that will keep them healthy.

This fall's **U.P. Health Access Coalition** access to care conference Oct. 8 will explore the economic, political and practical considerations of helping uninsured U.P. residents locate and acquire affordable health care and services. The conference, *"Health Care in the U.P. Today ... and the Road to Tomorrow,"* at the Island Resort and Casino Conference Center in Harris, west of Escanaba, is open to the public and is being held in conjunction with the local access coalition, Medical Access Coalition of Delta and Menominee Counties.

Representatives of the U.P.'s five Local Access Coalitions, legislative staffers, hospital administrators and other service providers from the health care community of the U.P. will participate, along with residents who have benefitted from Access Coalition services.

"This conference will give participants a real time update on health care issues that are at the forefront of national, state and local news headlines," said Benjamin Wood, UPHAC Executive



For information on our regional partners, please go to www.uphealthaccess.org

Director. "What we're doing in the Upper Peninsula is special, and anyone who lives here should be able to gain something from this year's event."

Local access coalitions participating in the conference are:

- *Community Health Access Coalition* of Chippewa, Mackinac and Luce counties;
- *Dickinson-Iron Medical Care Access Coalition*;
- *Medical Care Access Coalition* of Marquette, Alger and Schoolcraft counties, including *Schoolcraft Health Access* and *Alger County Medical Access*; and
- *Western U.P. Healthcare Access Coalition*, serving the five western U.P. counties.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. (Eastern Daylight Time), followed by the conference welcome at 8:30 and a review of the 2008 UPHAC Return on Community Investment Report covering activities of local coalitions that, for almost a decade, have assisted uninsured residents to access health care, prescription medicines and related services.

A panel of U.P. hospital administrators will review issues and concerns they face in serving uninsured and underinsured citizens and will address opportunities for collaboration toward a cost-effective, efficient and service-focused continuum of care for all U.P. residents.

An afternoon panel of doctors, health department representatives, clinic personnel, health center administrators and other providers will discuss the challenges and prospects they face in meeting community health needs. Steve Roell of TDS Pharmacy in Dickinson and Iron counties will present the perspective of a community pharmacist in the patient service network.

A morning presentation will review the current political environment in Lansing and its impacts on health services in the field. Staff of Congressional and legislative representatives will brief conference participants on progress toward new legislation and health care prospects for the coming year.

The \$35 conference registration fee includes a continental breakfast and lunch. For more information on the conference or to pre-register to attend, contact the UPHAC office at 906.233.0210 or Angel Dittrich at adittrich@uphealthaccess.org .

A limited number of overnight rooms are available for the evening of Oct. 7 at the Evergreen Inn, one mile from the conference center. The Inn offers shuttle service to the conference center; room rate is \$55 per night. Make reservations, under the "U.P. Health Access" block, by calling the hotel at 906.466.4000 or 800.387.9770.

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