

BCBSMA FOUNDATION 2003 GRANT AWARDS
Strengthening the Voice for Access – Grant Summaries

Grants in the **Strengthening the Voice for Access** area will help promote the interests of uninsured and low-income residents across Massachusetts. Funding will strengthen community-based policy activities, increase consumer participation in public policy development, and promote collaboration among policy and advocacy organizations. The grants range from \$30,000 to \$50,000.

Health Care For All (HCFA)

\$50,000

Continued support to build the capacity of HCFA to develop a comprehensive strategy to preserve and enhance health care access through policy development and a statewide organizing effort. Funding will also support the *Health Care Policy and Constituent Leadership Project* to develop the role of consumers and community leaders in all aspects of health care policy analysis and decision-making through education and empowerment.

Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers

\$50,000

Continued support for *Community Advocacy for Change* which educates, organizes and mobilizes community health center board members and other community based advocates to respond to health policy changes that affect health center financing and patient access to community-based services. Funding in 2004 will support policy tracking and analysis, a major Board Symposium in May 2004, the development of two position papers, and the continued work of the Community Health Policy Advocate.

Community Partners, Inc.

\$40,000

Renewed funding for the *Community Health Access Initiative* to provide the state's frontline health care workers with timely information and enhanced skills. Community Partners will coordinate networking meetings, disseminate monthly print and Internet-based bulletins, develop an Internet resource and communication center, and offer training and practical tools for community health workers.

Massachusetts Senior Action Council (MSAC)

\$40,000

Continued support for the *Campaign for Affordable Medications*, an initiative to increase civic activism and participation of seniors in efforts to lower the costs of prescription drugs. Funding will support advocacy, education, grassroots mobilization, and forums on prescription drug access issues.

Health Law Advocates (HLA)

\$35,000

Continued support for HLA's *Dental Health Access Project* to increase access to dental care by instituting systemic change in the MassHealth dental program. HLA aims to strengthen its campaign to improve the MassHealth dental program and restore adult dental benefits through education, a statewide grassroots campaign, monitoring of DMA's compliance with regulations, and a lawsuit against the state.

Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)

\$35,000

Renewed funding to develop the immigrant community's participation in public policy development, and to create collaborations among policy, advocacy, and service organizations on immigrant health care access issues. The two projects underway within the *Access to Benefits* program at MIRA are: 1) MassHealth Restoration Campaign; and 2) Immigrant Health Care Access (training CBOs and providers on state benefits policies, and interaction with state agencies to ensure fair policies and procedures).

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, Inc. (MLRI)

\$35,000

Continued support for the *MassHealth Legal Defense Project* to enable MLRI to continue defending MassHealth and other publicly funded access programs from further restrictions and cuts. MLRI will also provide training and technical assistance to other advocates and outreach workers who serve low-income and uninsured consumers.

Paraprofessional Health Care Institute

\$35,000

Continued support for the multi-year *Health Insurance for Health Care Workers* initiative to develop and promote principles and a policy framework to expand health insurance coverage for direct care workers. The Institute will raise community-based awareness of the value of direct care workers, support workers' and employers' participation in policy work, and encourage voter registration among workers.

Massachusetts Community Health Worker Network (MACHW)

\$30,000

Renewed funding to support MACHW's efforts in expanding access to health care for the uninsured by developing the advocacy power of community health workers (CHWs) and the people they serve. The organization aims to strengthen the field of community health work through advocacy and professional development; create a supportive, secure work environment for CHWs; and inform and unify CHWs of all disciplines throughout state.

Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA)

\$30,000

Continued support of a statewide initiative to promote the health care interests of homeless people with disabilities, resulting in strategies and development of policy initiatives to address the unmet needs of this population for health care, income and housing to end their homelessness.

Women’s Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU)

\$30,000

Renewed funding to move forward with the in-depth analysis and policy development phase of the Health Economic Sufficiency Standard (HESS) project, a technical model designed to measure the economic burden of health costs on typical Massachusetts families. WEIU will release a HESS companion study and context papers on health disparities and the impact of certain medical conditions. It will also convene hearings and community meetings to elevate the public’s awareness of study findings.

Voice and Future Fund, Inc. (VFF)

\$30,000

Funding to improve the health insurance coverage of Massachusetts low-wage immigrants, particularly Latinos, through the development of a group of leaders who can raise the public profile of their constituency and promote their situation and needs to policymakers. VFF is a newly incorporated organization that was created by the revitalized Janitor’s Union earlier this year, and is expected to build advocacy leadership for SEIU 165 union members.