

**BCBSMA FOUNDATION 2005 AWARDS**  
*Strengthening the Voice for Access – Grant Summaries*

The *Strengthening the Voice for Access* program provides core operating support to Massachusetts organizations whose mission and activities include a significant focus on promoting the health care interests of uninsured and low-income residents. These organizations demonstrate strong models to strengthen community-based policy activities, increase citizen participation in public policy development, and promote collaboration among statewide policy and advocacy organizations on health access issues. The grants range from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and total \$520,000.

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**Alliance to Defend Health Care**

\$35,000

Funding to expand their ongoing work to educate the health professional community, the general public, and state and local policy-makers about the growing problems in the areas of health care access, quality, and affordability. The Alliance will engage in grassroots advocacy and coalition-building efforts to build the vision that universal coverage is a realistic health reform goal in Massachusetts.

**Community Partners**

\$50,000

Renewed funding for the Health Access Network, a program they facilitate that promotes increased access and healthier communities by empowering frontline health workers to collaborate and share information with their peers and other health care leaders. They will hold numerous, frequent, and easily accessible opportunities for frontline workers to exchange information with each other and give feedback to program administrators and policy-makers

**Health Care for All**

\$50,000

Renewed funding to advance the health care reform movement to success by educating policy-makers and the public, organizing strong broadly based coalitions, and ensuring that low-income and minority consumers participate in the decision-making process. Their mission is to build a movement of empowered communities with the goal of creating a health system that is responsive to the needs of all people, particularly the most vulnerable.

### **Health Law Advocates**

\$40,000

Renewed funding to support ongoing efforts that include: improving access to dental care, improving access to children's mental health services, assisting divorcing women maintain their coverage after the divorce, and expanding its Legal Network to provide pro bono legal services to consumers denied access to health care. The organization often provides legal counsel to individual clients and grassroots coalitions, as well as being a general advocate for Massachusetts residents who are experiencing difficulty accessing medical services.

### **Massachusetts Community Health Worker Network**

\$50,000

Renewed funding to support efforts to expand the ranks of community health workers and community residents involved in statewide health care advocacy. Funding will help build organizational capacity, develop a strategic plan to become an independent 501 (c) (3), and engage and train additional Community Health Workers to become advocates for the defense and expansion of health care access at the local and state levels.

### **Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance**

\$25,000

Renewed funding to continue advocacy for and development of effective programs that facilitate health care access for unaccompanied homeless adults. MHSA will promote adoption of the Housing First program model that targets the medical needs of chronically homeless persons and public awareness of homelessness as a public health issue and promotes understanding of health care access issues for the homeless.

### **Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition**

\$50,000

Renewed funding to restore access to health care, ameliorate health outcome disparities, and improve the quality of care for Massachusetts immigrants through the MIRACLE Campaign. They will use their institutional organizing framework to activate a network of district-based activists into grassroots efforts to educate elected officials about the need to improve access to health care for immigrants and refugees in the Commonwealth, especially for the more than 7,000 legal immigrants who go without access to health insurance.

### **Massachusetts Law Reform Institute**

\$45,000

Renewed funding supports legal expertise on MassHealth and other publicly funded health access programs to prevent further restrictions, and to support restorations and expansions. Additionally, MLRI will provide legal analyses of any changes in MassHealth eligibility or services in terms of compliance with federal laws and research and develop policy options.

### **Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers**

\$50,000

Renewed funding to support new approaches for mobilizing the community health center movement statewide to ensure access to affordable health care for underserved patients. Program objectives include developing a community health policy agenda, systematically monitoring safety net programs such as the Uncompensated Care Pool, evaluating new proposals for expansion of health care coverage statewide, and working with interested parties to promote strategies that expand health center services to more uninsured patients.

### **Massachusetts Senior Action Council**

\$45,000

Renewed funding to support monitoring and organizing work related to the implementation of the Medicare prescription drug program, which will affect one million Massachusetts recipients, 500,000 of which are low-income seniors. MSAC will strengthen and expand existing coalitions, working with a range of community, labor, civil rights, and human service organizations and provide education via chapter and community meetings and publications.

### **Public Policy Institute**

Collaborators: Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Voice & Future Fund, Latin American Health Institute, Health Care for All

\$40,000

Funding will support their role in the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Campaign for Long-Term Equality (MIRACLE) with the goal of restoring MassHealth coverage for legal immigrants, ensuring the cultural competence of health care services, and advocate for funding of interpreter services. PPI will provide the MIRACLE campaign collaborators with strategy coordination, facilitation of campaign meetings, assistance with policy and fundraising strategies, and building the capacity of all collaborators to do effective advocacy.

**Voice & Future Fund, Inc.**

\$40,000

Renewed funding to identify, train, and involve low-wage immigrant workers and mobilize them in policymaker education and advocacy for the MIRACLE campaign. VFF works to expand the voice of its members and their families and communities and increase civic and economic contributions through education, capacity building, and community, civic, and business partnerships.