



**Consumers for
AFFORDABLE
Health Care**

*Advocating the right to health care
for every man, woman and child.*

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Maine Receiving Big Bucks to Make Health Care Better

As Maine's largest consumer health coalition, Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC), is thrilled to see more effort go toward improving the quality of health care Mainers receive. Maine is one of 14 communities chosen nationwide to share a \$300 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

New research shows the quality of care people receive can vary dramatically depending on their race and where they live. This grant "*Aligning Forces for Quality*" is aimed at identifying why those disparities exist and how patients and health care providers can work together as a team to close some of the gaps. Maine was chosen to take part in this effort based on work it's already done in health care, including the formation of *Dirigo Health* which has helped provide insurance to thousands of hard-working Maine families, and small businesses and helps control costs for thousands of other residents with private insurance.

They were selected as part of a highly competitive process to find communities that were positioned to make fundamental and cutting-edge changes to rebuild their health care systems. -Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When talking about the need for more team work in the health care system, CAHC Director of Programs and Policy, Hilary Schneider put on her parent hat, and spoke as the mother of a one and a half year old boy who was recently diagnosed with severe asthma and allergies.

For the past six months, our family has experienced a journey through the health care system that could be compared to a rollercoaster ride of highs and lows. In the hospital, we've received state-of-the art emergency care that has stabilized my son's breathing. But, after the first hospital stay, we were sent home with new medications and equipment, which would make anyone feel overwhelmed, and there was never any discussion of the challenges we might face once we got home. - Hilary Schneider

Schneider's experience is just one of thousands that prove better communications through out the health care industry could literally mean the difference between life and death. Her story illustrates why this grant can make such a difference for so many people in Maine and can help bring every man, woman and child the quality, affordable health care they need and deserve.

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"Health care should be a right, not a privilege."