

Further information regarding Vermont's Human Right to Healthcare Rally

*** * * PRESS RELEASE * * ***

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Vermonters Rally for their Human Right to Healthcare

Over a thousand people rallied at Montpelier's State House on May 1st to demand the human right to healthcare, according to estimates by the organizers, the Vermont Workers' Center.

Demonstrators marched from City Hall to the State House to deliver hundreds of petition cards, demanding that Governor Jim Douglas stand with Vermonters to recognize healthcare as a human right and not a commodity.

Speakers at the rally included healthcare workers, union representatives and politicians, including Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). All put forth the key message that healthcare is a human right, and that healthcare reform needs to be based on human rights principles, such as universality, equity and accountability. Senator Sanders told the crowd: "You are saying loud and clear that healthcare is a human right for all people, not just the privileged or those who have a lot of money."

Demonstrators especially applauded Senator Sanders' mention of a pending U.S. Senate bill which would enable five states to begin a "pilot program" to test new healthcare models, such as a single payer system. There is a clear expectation that Vermont will be involved in this experiment and that other states may follow suit in adopting a single payer model, which would guarantee healthcare for all.

Jim Ramey, a demonstrator at Friday's rally, put it succinctly when he said: "I think the world should be meeting human needs and not corporations' needs."

Senator Sanders spoke passionately about the need to change healthcare priorities in this country. "We're spending almost twice as much per person on healthcare as any other country. Our problem is that we're spending money for profits, for bureaucracy, for advertising, for billing. We're not spending it where we need it for doctors, nurses, medicine, healthcare professionals."

For Senator Sanders' speech and photographs, see www.nesri.org

For more information on the rally, see www.workerscenter.org

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