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My name is Tessa Marquis. My statement is of a general nature concerning Health Care Insurance. I would like to share with you an experience I had recently that you need to be aware of.

In the first week of this month I volunteered at the Free Clinic here at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. Along with 150 healthcare providers and more than 800 non-medical volunteers, we spent 11 hours assisting nearly **a thousand people** to get medical checkups and advice. My husband and I were assigned to register people as they entered for treatment. We were doing the simplest of tasks: filling out the forms that started patients into the process of seeing nurses and doctors. . People, some shyly, some with anger, some tearfully, began to tell their stories.

- Newly unemployed with no insurance.
- Spending all their available funds to buy insurance for other family members.
- Afraid to see a doctor because if there was something wrong they couldn't pay for treatment
- Working but unable to afford insurance and not qualified for aid

It was like listening to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. We let them talk, or be angry, or just let out whatever thoughts they had so they could catch their breath and go forward.

If people could have taken the day off work, mid-week, we would have 5 times as many people at the Free Clinic in Hartford - The Insurance Capital of the United States. It is scandalous that so many people are in such need and the insurance companies continue their greedy work – forcing Doctors and patients to make decisions based on finances rather than need.

I have submitted a copy of a letter to me from Nicole Lamoureux, Executive Director of the National Association of Free Clinics, which directs you to the website of the Association and more information on the issues of uninsured and underinsured people.

For many women, the gynecologist serves as their primary care physician. It may be the only time they see a doctor is when pregnant or seeking care for women's health issues.

The Kaiser Foundation report Women's Health Policy Program from last year states:

Health insurance is a critical factor in making health care accessible to women. Women with coverage are more likely to obtain preventive, primary, and specialty care services, and have better access to many of the new advances in women's health. Most of the 95 million women ages 18 to 64 have some form of coverage. However, the patchwork of different private sector and publicly-funded programs in the U.S. leaves nearly one in five non-elderly women uninsured. Nearly all women 65 and older are covered by Medicare.

Their Fact Sheet "...summarizes the major policy challenges facing women in obtaining health coverage, and provides data on the more than 17 million women who are uninsured."

I think that bears repeating: 17 Million women in the United States of America are uninsured.

I commend you for your work to fix a broken system.

Tessa Marquis  
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February 1, 2010

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136409-3889

Dear Tessa:

On behalf of the National Association of Free Clinics (NAFC), I would like to thank you for your support of the NAFC and your time and efforts shared at one (or more) of the recent C.A.R.E. free health clinics. C.A.R.E. stands for "Communities Are Responding Everyday," a sentiment that is obvious when one looks at the outpouring of support that the uninsured has received from each one of you.

These important events would not be possible without your support and participation, whether as a medical or non-medical volunteer. Through the generosity of your time and talent we have been able to provide care for several thousand uninsured people. At the last clinic in Hartford, CT just about 1,000 patients were provided medical care. At clinics in 2009, almost 1,800 people were seen in Houston, TX, more than 1,000 people in New Orleans, LA, more than 1,000 in Little Rock, AR, and almost 2,300 patients at the two-day event in Kansas City, MO.

Information about the National Association of Free Clinics, our many local member clinics, and any upcoming C.A.R.E. clinics can be found on our website – [www.freeclinics.us](http://www.freeclinics.us). The website also contains links on how to donate to the NAFC, and information on how you can continue your volunteer efforts at a local free clinic. You can also follow our progress online through the NAFC's facebook and twitter sites.

Again, thank you for making these important events possible through your volunteer efforts. It is because of you that our association is able to help uninsured people not only get care, but get connected to the safety net in place that they may not have been aware of before attending the event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nicole D. Lamoureux". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Nicole D. Lamoureux  
Executive Director

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