

HEALTH CARE FOR MASSACHUSETTS CAMPAIGN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Planned Parenthood Endorses Constitutional Amendment Campaign to Ensure Health Care for Every Massachusetts Resident

Second 'Yes' at Upcoming ConCon Sends Amendment to Voters in 2006

August 15, 2005 (BOSTON, MA) — The **Health Care for Massachusetts Campaign (HCMC)** today announced that the **Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts (PPLM)** has joined its list of supporters working to amend the state constitution to guarantee that everyone has access to affordable health care coverage. Approved by the Legislature last year by a 153 to 41 vote, the Health Care Amendment now only needs a 'yes' vote by 50 legislators at this year's ConCon on August 24th to move to the November 2006 ballot for voters to decide.

The Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts has helped people make responsible choices about their sexual health for over 77 years. The organization works to protect and expand the reproductive health options available to women and men in Massachusetts, helping them lead fuller and healthier lives.

"As the state's leading free-standing provider of reproductive health services for women, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts is committed to improving access to health care for every resident of Massachusetts. That is why we are so supportive of an amendment that will guarantee all residents of the commonwealth access to affordable health insurance coverage," said Dianne Luby, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts.

"We are grateful and pleased that Planned Parenthood has chosen to add their energy to our efforts to fix the moral and economic crisis surrounding health care in our state once and for all," said Barbara Roop, co-chair of the HCMC. "While the reform proposals now before the Legislature vary widely, everyone – left, center and right – is now publicly on record as favoring universal coverage. They need a 'lock in' to ensure reforms produce the 'win-win' outcomes essential to the health and financial stability of Massachusetts residents and the competitiveness of our economy — that's where the health care constitutional amendment comes in."

"Decades of contribution by this venerated organization have resulted in significant achievements for the health and welfare of this state, particularly for women," said Dr. John Goodson, co-chair of the HCMC. "Within its vision for the future, Planned Parenthood has proclaimed its desire to secure a future that ensures access to quality health care, education and advocacy for everyone. Their endorsement is further evidence of their unrelenting dedication to do so."

Sent to legislators as a ballot petition by 71,385 registered voters last year, the amendment received overwhelming, preliminary approval with 153 votes – far surpassing the required 50. The amendment must now receive a second "yes" vote by 50 legislators at this year's Constitutional Convention on August 24th, and then go to voters in November 2006 for final ratification. Once the laws are enacted, proposed plans will go to voters for their approval.

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(A recent poll conducted by the State House News Service revealed that 75.5 percent of voters support the amendment.) The campaign is seen by many as a driving force that has pushed people to work harder on reform knowing the ballot question is in play.

Among the numerous HCMC endorsers are the Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Greater Boston Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility and the American Medical Students Association. More information about the 'Health Care for Massachusetts' Campaign can be found at: www.HealthCareForMass.org.

About PPLM

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts is the largest freestanding reproductive health care provider in the state. For more than 77 years, PPLM has protected and promoted reproductive health and freedom of choice through clinical services, education and advocacy. For more information, visit www.pplm.org

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