Welcome

You Don’t Need a Home to Vote!
Election Year Activities for HCH Projects

April 26, 2012

We will begin promptly at 2:00pm, EDT

Event Host
Dan Rabbitt, MSW
Health Policy Organizer
National HCH Council

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You Don’t Need a Home to Vote!
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April 26, 2012
Presenters

Michael Stoops  
Director of Community Organizing  
National Coalition for the Homeless

Marc Wetherhorn  
National Advocacy Director  
National Association of Community Health Centers

James Kowalsky  
PATH Outreach Worker  
Heartland Health Outreach Chicago, IL

Joseph Benson  
Volunteer and Community Outreach  
SEARCH Homeless Houston, TX
Overview

- Voting Issues Faced by the Homeless
- You Don’t Need a Home to Vote Campaign
- Incorporating Voter Registration into Operations
- Community Health Vote Campaign
- Staff Led Voter Registration Efforts
- Consumer Led Voter Registration Efforts
- Questions
You Don’t Need a Home to Vote
Campaign by the National Coalition for the Homeless

There isn’t a way that I can encourage America’s homeless to vote.
There isn’t a way that I can encourage America’s homeless.
There isn’t a way that I can encourage America.
There isn’t a way that I can encourage.
There isn’t a way that I can.
There isn’t a way.

There is.

Half of all U.S. states require a permanent address to vote. That’s a problem when you don’t have one. Please become a member of NCH, and join us in bringing America home. We’ve organized the You Don’t Need a Home to Vote Campaign. To help get the word out in your community, download or order your NCH Voter Rights Registration Packet at www.nationalhomeless.org.

NATIONAL COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS We depend on the kindness of strangers. www.nationalhomeless.org info@nationalhomeless.org 202-462-4822

Bringing America Home
Voting is Important!

- Homeless persons and homeless services are dramatically impacted by the decisions of elected officials.
- Voting is empowering.
- Homeless persons must vote to be heard.
- Homeless persons are underrepresented.
Voter Participation Rates


Source: US Census Bureau.
Barriers Faced by the Homeless

- No fixed address
- No identification
- Criminal record
- Lack of education
- Competing basic needs
Voter Registration Efforts

- Campaigns to register low-income individuals ongoing for decades
- National Voter Registration Act
- You Don’t Need a Home to Vote Campaign
National Coalition for the Homeless
2012 Voter Registration Manual

- Voter registration initiatives
- Voter education
- Get out the vote
- Legal rights/issues
Voter Registration Initiatives: More than just a Registration Drive

- Sustain voter registration efforts beyond special events
- Engage other local homeless service providers
- Incorporate voter registration into data collected by the Homeless Management Information System
- Incorporate voter registration into Point-in-Time Counts
Important Dates to Remember

- Republican Convention: Aug. 21, 2012
- Low-income Voter Registration Week: Sept. 30-Oct. 6, 2012
- Homelessness is often not a major issue of campaigns
- Organize a candidate forum on homelessness to acquire visibility
- Educate consumers and public about issues of homelessness
- Start planning now
Get Out the Vote

- Get out the vote efforts are often neglected.
- It is very important to incorporate this into your project’s efforts.
Legal Issues and Rights

- You do not need a fixed address to vote
- Learn the specific laws of your state/county
- Educate your community
- Become a registrar
- Report issues to public interest groups
Resources:
2012 Voter Registration Manual

The Strength
To End Homelessness

Lies in the Power of Your
VOTE!

"You Don't Need A Home to Vote"
A national homeless voter registration/education/social change campaign
Sponsored by the National Coalition for the Homeless
1012 14th Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005-3475
Phone: 202-737-6444 Fax: 202-737-6445
www.nationalhomeless.org
www.nationalhomeless.org

Artist: Tommie W. Bonner
pneuma_art@yahoo.com

National Coalition for the Homeless
Bringing America Home
Community Health Vote 2012
Non Partisan Voter Engagement
at Health Centers

National Health Care for the Homeless Council Webinar
April 26, 2012

Presented by
Marc Wetherhorn
National Advocacy Director
Voter Engagement – Not Just Voter Registration

1. Actively encourage clients and staff to register to vote
2. Communicate with all, or as many clients as possible, in a non-partisan way about the importance of voting for their health and their health center
3. Make voting information as visible as possible throughout the centers
4. Make non-partisan voter registration an integral part of National Health Center Week activities
5. Participate in National Voter Registration Day – 9/25/12
6. Conduct a national non-partisan get out the vote effort leading up to and on election day
7. Track our results in increasing voter turnout among our clients
THE RULE to Remember

May Not Support or Oppose a Candidate for Public Office

This is a non-partisan project.
Please express your political celebration or mourning after you leave.
Thx - Right
The Rules: Dos and Don’ts

**DO**
- Voter Registration
- Voter Education
- Distribute Sample Ballots, Guides
- Co-sponsor Candidate Forums
- Educate the Candidates
- Remind People to Vote
- Help on Election Day:
  - Recruit Poll Workers
  - Support or Oppose Ballot Questions

**DON’T**
- Endorse a candidate for office
- Give resources to candidates
- Rate candidates on your issue
- Tell people how to vote
How Do We Do It - Registration

Basic Principles

- Voting is the Key
- Combine with Other Activity!
- Updating Important as New
- Near the Deadline Best
How Do We Do It - Registration

Integrate voter registration into your Health Center’s ongoing activities

• Designate a staff person at each site to serve as coordinator of your Health Center’s voter registration activities.

• Make sure to contact your county registrar and learn any local requirements for registration or registering voters.

• Ask every patient at intake if he/she would like to register to vote or update their registration; provide a voter registration application, a “qualification form,” and a follow up enrollment card.

• Ask staff, volunteers, and board members if they would like to register to vote during meetings.

• Register voters at community events, especially
  National Health Center Week - August 5-11, 2012
  National Voter Registration Day – September 25, 2012
1. **Put up posters around your health center, not just in the waiting room to let patients know that voter registration forms are available.**

2. **Register AND Educate:** Give everyone an option to get more information and to sign up as an advocate.

3. **Assure completed forms get submitted** - provide envelopes or boxes for voter registration and advocacy forms to be dropped into upon completion. Know how long you have to turn in completed registration forms to your County registrar or Secretary of State after they are filled out. Have a staff member designated to turn in all completed forms each week, OR partner with a local community volunteer to pick up your health center’s voter registration forms.

5. **BEFORE YOU TURN IN VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS:** Track the number of voter registration forms completed at your health center and capture information for those who want reminders and information
“The NVRA has a provision to designate offices that provide ‘public assistance’ as voter registration agencies. Public assistance agencies include any site where an individual may apply or receive an application for Medicaid, such as FQHCs. Under this law, FQHCs with State, city, or county employees as outstationed Medicaid eligibility workers are considered public assistance offices and must provide voter registration services. The FQHCs that use non-governmental employees as outstationed Medicaid eligibility workers (e.g., clinic staff, volunteers) may provide voter registration services.”

-BPHC Program Assistance Letter 2000-18
Integrate or emphasize registration in public assistance enrollment at sites where this is being done

• Train or educate enrollment staff on the importance of offering registration as part of this process and how to assist registrants

• Provide a separate opt-in form or mechanism to allow registrants to sign up as health center advocates and/or to get ongoing voting information and reminders
How Do We Do it - Education

- Encourage registrants to become advocates and/or to get ongoing voting information and reminders
- Assemble registrant contact information in a database
- Periodic email and text updates and information about voting locations times, early voting, etc.
- Reminders about registration and voting in some patient communications
- Periodic “how-to” vote sessions, including early voting and voting hotlines to assist clients in voting
- In states with new voter laws or ID requirements, provide information about the changes and how to comply
On How to Vote

- Voting By Mail
- Paper Ballots
- Special Circumstances
  - Ex-offenders
  - Disability
  - Language
  - 17 year olds
How Do We Do It – Education & GOTV

• Capture registrant contact information
  Enter and/or assemble registrant contact information in a database
• Send periodic email and text updates and information about voting locations, times, etc.
• Provide voter information materials and signage throughout the health center
• Include reminders about registration and voting in some patient communications
• Periodic “how-to” vote sessions, on the mechanics of voting, including early and absentee voting and voting hotlines to assist clients in voting
National Resources

Fair Elections Legal Network
Nonprofit Vote
TurboVote
State Voices
National Council of La Raza
Elements of Success

- Organizational Commitment – Board and staff understand the importance

- Individual Champions – someone responsible who WANTS to make it work

- A plan for implementation

- Support from NACHC, PCAs & Partners
Important Dates

• Election Day: November 6, 2012
• Early Voting periods: vary by state
• Registration closing dates: vary by state
• National Voter Registration Day: September 25, 2012
• National Health Center Week: August 5-11, 2012
Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.

– Edmund Burke
The Power of Large Numbers

If every health center site registered 1 new voter every business day from May 1 to October 6, we would register nearly **1,000,000** new voters!
For More Information

Marc Wetherhorn
mwetherhorn@nachc.com
540-942-3862

http://www.nachc.com/Community%20Health%20Vote.cfm
http://www.saveourchcs.org/your-health-your-vote.cfm
Voter Registration at Heartland Health Outreach
Illinois Voter Registration Form
Voter Registration at Houston HCH
Voter Registration at Houston HCH

- Consumer driven
- Every Monday year round
- Extensive work with local election board
- Get out the vote campaign
Questions?

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Resources

- National HCH Council Voter Registration Page
  
  http://www.nhchc.org/voter-registration/

- Community Health Vote
  
  http://www.saveourchcs.org/community-health-vote.cfm

  

- Nonprofit Vote
  
  http://www.nonprofitvote.org/
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