

# Steelworkers Union Calls for Single Payer Healthcare

*The 31<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) held in Las Vegas August 5-8, attended by 2,500 union leaders from across the US and Canada, was convened under the banner "Fighting to Win." It took up issues connected with collective bargaining, organizing, global justice and political activism. The convention adopted a special resolution calling for a new universal comprehensive healthcare system. The resolution, titled "For a Single Payer Healthcare, Publicly-Funded, Not-for-Profit Health Plan" and passed as an "emergency measure," was referred to the convention by action of USWA Local 1375.*

The resolution reads in part:

WHEREAS, every person residing or employed in the United States is entitled, as a matter of right, to accessible, affordable and quality health care; and

WHEREAS, this Union, the United Steelworkers of America recognizes that there is a growing crisis in health care in the United State of America manifested by massive layoffs, a steep increase in premiums, co-payments and deductibles, and the closing of many health care facilities serving low-to-middle income residents; and

WHEREAS, 44 million people in the United States have no health insurance coverage and that number is increasing rapidly; and

WHEREAS, 42 million people having only limited insurance are one catastrophic illness away from bankruptcy; and

WHEREAS, insured person now commonly experience unacceptable and sometimes life-threatening delays in obtaining approval for needed health care services by private, for-profit health insurers; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that the complex and redundant bureaucracy arising from the existence of multiple, for-profit insurance plans, each with its own distinct program of coverage and benefits, its own costly administrative and executive structure, and its own system of processing managed care approvals, and payments of benefits and/or reimbursements,

wastes up to 30% of medical coverage premiums paid for by employers and private citizens; resources which otherwise could be used to provide benefits; and WHEREAS, the bureaucratic structure and its inefficiencies distract health care providers from providing efficient and effective medical services to patients and places a drain on the financial resources of taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, this Union contends that a single-payer, publicly-funded, not-for-profit health plan will: eliminate the redundant bureaucracy caused by numerous insurers; greatly reduce administrative costs associated with providing medical care; free-up additional financial resources; allow medical providers to focus their efforts on providing quality care; and reduce the cost of health care coverage for residents and employers; and

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure providing for the immediate preservation of the public health; now therefore,

## **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA:**

Section 1. That the Delegates to the Thirty-First Constitutional Convention of the United Steelworkers of America urges the United States House and Senate to commit to enact a comprehensive, publicly funded, not-for-profit health insurance program covering: (a) all residents of the United States of America as well as all dependents of united States residents, whether residing within the United States or elsewhere; and (b) all persons employed in the United States, regardless of residence within or outside of the United States as well as their dependents.

Section 2. That this Thirty-First Constitutional Convention urges the prompt passage of Single Payer Health Insurance System (see page 70 for details of this section).

Section 3. That the Secretary-Treasurer of the United Steelworkers of America is hereby requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the members of the United States House and Senate.