

2009 - It's Time!

Why We Need National Health Care Reform Now

“Take a good look at me. Just think for a moment. There are thousands of others who cannot attain affordable health care. Many of these people have serious illnesses. Many of these people could become healthy contributing members of society if they could only get the health care they need.”

-Ella Parham, Jackson, TN

Ella Parham was a public school teacher for 20 years. When she retired in 1999 at the age of 52, she looked forward to years of volunteer work with various charities and community organizations. When Ella was dropped from TennCare in 2005, however, Ella had no choice but to buy private insurance, which she cannot afford with her retirement pension of less than \$1000 per month. Needless to say, Ella has not been able to enjoy her retirement the way she had hoped.



Retired school teacher Ella Parham is pictured speaking at a Town Hall Meeting in Jackson, TN. Parham spends have of her income on health care and must continue working in order to pay for this care.

Ella must control her diabetes and arthritis. To afford her insulin and other medications, she works as a substitute teacher. Although Ella wants to be active, teaching sometimes requires hours of walking or standing, which is painful and aggravates her medical conditions. Recently, her doctor told her that she needs knee replacement surgery. Ella cannot afford to take time off work to get this surgery and pay for her health insurance.

Ella is spending about half of her \$14,000 annual income on health care. It is difficult at times for her to afford her basic needs such as heating her house in the winter. She is not eligible for CoverTN or AccessTN, despite the fact that she works and has preexisting conditions.



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