

Hoosiers' Edith Kenna honored by National Association of Social Workers

By Dan Jehl

Exclusive for Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan

On Friday, March 27, the Northeast Indiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers bestowed an award on Edith Kenna as their "Social Worker of the Year." Ivy Tech Community College in Fort Wayne hosted the ceremony.



Linda Hartley, Manager of Child Day Treatment at Park Center Fort Wayne, presented Edith Kenna's award, describing her as an "advocate's advocate," who works above and beyond her Park Center child social work job "tirelessly with passion" on the cause of universal health care for all.

Edith Kenna is a social worker at Park Center Fort Wayne, specializing on children's health issues for more than 20 years. Kenna helps children with behavioral or mental health care needs, is an active member and advocate for Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan, is an active member of Fort Wayne Public I, a public interest citizen advocacy group, and proud mom and yes proud grandma too. In fact, her daughter's health care dilemma propelled Kenna into the public arena pursuing health care for us all.

Linda Hartley, after describing Kenna, said: "This really does not do her justice."



Hartley called Kenna “ferocious” about healthcare reform, relaying how Kenna has “personally been touched by this in her family” and stays “out there fighting for improvements for all.”

“She is not only a squeaky wheel but a loud and unrelenting squeaky wheel when she believes in something or sees that things need to change,” said Hartley.

In accepting the award, true-to-form Kenna advocated for health care. “We have 47 million without health insurance and more than 780,000 Hoosiers; and I am not talking about just health insurance. I mean what matters is access to health care,” said Kenna.

Kenna’s Hoosiers for a Commonsense Health Plan supports U.S. House Bill 676, single payer or Medicare for all, introduced by Rep. John Conyers from Michigan. It now has 100 congressional sponsors. However, this healthcare reform bill is stuck in a congressional committee.

In accepting the award, Kenna was true to form. She expressed “surprise” in receiving the award and proceeded to show why she received it. She advocated for healthcare in her acceptance speech.



She held a picket sign for House Bill 676 “Single Payer for All.” She noted she had leaflets and information on Hoosiers and HB 676 for those interested. She urged people to contact their legislators on healthcare access. And she asked people to attend the PBS and T.R. Reid’s “Sick Around the World, Friday, April 17, 8:30-1030 AM Park Center Gymnasium , Conference Room B, 909 East State Blvd. sponsored by Hoosiers, Northeast Chapter of NASW, and Fort Wayne Public 1, Inc.

Kenna now advances to the state awards competition of the Indiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers as the Northeast Indiana NASW chapter nominee for “State Social Worker of the Year.” The state awards will be this fall in Indianapolis.

If it were up to those who know Kenna in Fort Wayne, she would win again.

Actually, she is a winner who wants a win with universal healthcare. And like the Energizer Bunny, Kenna keeps on keeping on to pursue this win, and her peers in Fort Wayne took a moment to recognize this as their “Social Worker of the Year.”

The recognition Kenna seeks is selflessly for others-healthcare for all. And this community leader and winner continues on and on the road less traveled and more and more are traveling with her. Congratulations Edith Kenna!