



ARTISTS UNITED FOR HEALTHCARE

CCI was funded by Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC) in 2007 to work with a consortium of qualified partners to launch, manage and maintain a new website portal for California artists called Artists United for Healthcare (AUFH). The website was designed to provide individual artists with information and a voice in the state's universal healthcare legislative debate. The primary strategies involved in this project were a) to create a baseline of information on artists' health care needs by commissioning a study by UCLA Center for Health Policy Research to survey California artists about such needs; and b) to bring knowledgeable experts in the arts, health care policy, technology and consumer advocacy together to create a robust forum for artists to become informed about healthcare issues and pending legislative proposals, to exchange "stories" and ideas, and to become advocates on health care issues and pending legislative proposals.

In June 2007, Dr. E. Richard Brown, Director of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, and his Senior Research Associate, Shana Alex Lavarreda, MPP, were contracted by CCI on behalf of the AUFH team to develop and conduct a survey of the health care and insurance needs of California's individual artists, based loosely on an earlier national study conducted by UCLA for Actors' Equity, AFTRA and SAG union members. The purpose of the California artists' survey was to gather data that would inform health insurance advocacy efforts on behalf of all artists in the state. A total of 585 diverse California artists took the survey online between June 15 – August 15, 2007, and a final report on the findings was issued by UCLA Center on Health Policy Research on September 21, 2007.

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Simultaneously, the AUFH website was launched on June 15, 2007 by a team organized by LINC that included CCI, The Actors Fund, Evolve Strategies, Fenton Communications, and LINC's health care policy analyst, David Rice. The development period was extremely short – completed in just two weeks– the result of exceptional coordination and cooperation among the team members. The features of the original website included "Latest News" on California health care issues for artists; a link to news and information posted in a daily blog issued by California Health Access, background information on health care legislation and issues, a link to the UCLA California Artists' Health Insurance Survey, and links allowing visitors to send direct email to Governor Schwarzenegger's office and to the office of the legislator representing their respective districts in California. During the initial six-month pilot period, the AUFH website received 89,920 hits and 4,407 unique visitors. In addition, 483 individuals signed up to receive regular AUFH email updates. Following that, in 2009, the CCI transferred the AUFH website content to The Actors Fund as a long-term strategy which involved merging that information into the national "AHIRC" (Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center) website which now serves as the national, information portal for artists on how to get health insurance, state by state.

To visit the current artists healthcare website, go to: www.ahirc.org.