

Single payer health care cot'd

A single-payer system, Burger said, would also encourage preventive care, stopping individuals' health problems before they loom large and expensively. "We sent nurses" as volunteers from California "to areas hit by (Hurricane) Katrina and to the Astrodome" in Houston, which housed refugees from Katrina-ravaged New Orleans, she noted. The nurses expected to treat trauma from the hurri-

cane. They were wrong.

"They were treating hypertension and heart conditions. For many of these people, who were poor and without health insurance, it was their first visit by a health care professional, ever. The nurses were doing primary care—and they saw how our patched-up health care system doesn't work," Burger added.

Speakers said single-payer government-run health care would save money compared to the present system, by eliminating \$500 billion-\$600 billion in overhead, duplication, high CEO pay, advertising and other costs the insurers impose. Overall, the U.S. spends \$2 trillion, one-sixth of its gross national product, on health care.

More than 220 union groups—the latest be-

ing unionists in Oklahoma, and the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees—back HR 676, said Kay Tillow, a spokeswoman for the Louisville-based single-payer campaign, organized by union nurses.

Kucinich said single-payer would be financed by small payroll taxes on employers and employees, elimination of overhead, a surtax on the wealthy, a tax on stock and bond transfers and the end of Bush's tax cuts for the rich. In return, backers promised single-payer would let people choose their own doctors, guarantee care, and end deductibles, copayments and high premiums. "We'll see dramatic savings and redirection of resources from the insurance companies to the general public," he said.