

AMA-MSS CTUW Modules
#8 - Candlelight Vigil

- 1) Description:** Over 45 million Americans do not have health insurance coverage. This forces many people to forego needed medical care. A family's medical problems can go left unchecked, and then escalate into major issues. The costs of emergency medical treatments and more advanced can be extremely burdensome. Studies have shown that patients are more likely to die from an illness (including diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and cancer) if they are uninsured (<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/324/7349/1296/b>).

Holding a candlelight vigil at your medical school or in the community will bring this issue to the attention of medical students, health care workers, and the general public. This module will guide on holding a successful candlelight vigil event.

2) Target Audience:

Students, health professionals, and the community at large.

3) Participating Groups:

AMA-MSS Chapters

4) Budget:

Advertising Flyers.....	\$50.00
Informational Handouts for the Event.....	\$50.00
Candles.....	\$100.00
Refreshments.....	\$ 300.00
	\$ 500.00

5) Funding:

AMA-MSS Policy Promotions Grant (http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/112.html).....	\$ 500.00
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6) Step-by-Step Description:

- a) Look at the Cover the Uninsured Week website (www.covertheuninsured.com) and research articles about the problem of the uninsured in the United States. Select a speaker for the event who has expertise in dealing with the uninsured population (volunteer physician or nurse from a free clinic, social worker, local Health Department head).

- b) Secure a location for the candlelight vigil. This would ideally be an outdoor site. If weather or space prohibits, then make sure that lighting candles would be allowed in the building.
- c) Buy candles and other materials. Check out www.discountcandle.com
- d) Choose a date for the event, ideally during the national Cover the Uninsured Week.
- e) Apply for the AMA-MSS Policy Promotion Grant (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/112.html>) at least one week before the date of the event.
- f) Register your event <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/15985.html> and on www.covertheuninsured.org.
- g) Create posters to advertise your event to members of the community and healthcare students and professionals. If possible, also consider advertising in the local or school newspapers and on the local radio or television stations by sending press releases or writing op-eds, etc. Be sure to invite the Deans of the Health Science Schools to attend the event.
- h) Find posters and information fact sheets to hand out at the event at <http://covertheuninsuredweek.org/materials/> and get them printed.
- i) On the date of the event, get refreshments to follow the vigil. Hand out candles to attendees as they arrive. Have the speaker give a discussion of the issue. Following the talk, light the candles. Take a few minutes of silence. Hand out informational sheets to the attendees. Serve refreshments after the event.