

Greater
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Connecticut's Health Care Crisis Takes Center Stage with HartBeat Ensemble

HartBeat Ensemble, the area's theatrical social conscience, will dramatize Connecticut's health care crisis this summer through a series of performances in five city parks, starting July 12.

The 2008 Plays in the Park production is a joint project with Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, a nonpartisan, non-profit grant-making organization working to achieve quality, affordable health care for all Connecticut residents.

"Community theater is a great way to illustrate how our broken health care system disrupts people's lives," said Foundation President Juan Figueroa. "We hope that people will see these plays, better understand the issues, and become active in our state's health care

topic, the plays use humor to deliver the message.

HartBeat Co-Founder Steve Ginsberg said interviewing people put him in touch with the fragility of good health. "Our health could become jeopardized at any time. There's very little recourse in today's society if you don't have access to proper health care," he said.

Among the stories adapted for the stage are a tale of beauty salon owners who can't afford health insurance for their employee, a disillusioned insurance employee, and a doctor's assistant fighting insurance denials and red tape.

The free, family-oriented shows will be on Saturdays and Sundays in July. All plays begin at 5 p.m. Music and families activities will

Park, with music by Mixashawn; July 19 in Keney Park with music by Richard McGee III; July 20 in Sigourney Square Park with music by Alvin Carter Sr. and Alvin Carter Jr.; and on July 27 at Elizabeth Park with music by Adam Kubota and Ben Golder-Novick.

In case of rain, the performances will be held at the Hartford Children's Theater, 380 Farmington Avenue, Hartford.

HartBeat will also appear at Blue Back Square in West Hartford on July 26 with music by Stephen Haynes.

This is the third summer that HartBeat has performed Plays in the Parks. Previous seasons focused on people who work in the city and on homelessness in the greater Hartford area.

Additional funding for Plays in the Park was provided by the George A. and Grace L. Long Foundation.



Last year, HartBeat Ensemble's "Plays in the Park" explored issues surrounding the homeless in Greater Hartford. Shown above is a performance in Sigourney Park. (Hart photo)

reform movement."

The scripts were developed from interviews with residents who have suffered under Connecticut's dysfunctional health care system. Although they deal with a serious

start at 4 p.m. Picnickers are welcome. Food will also be available for sale.

Performances will be held on July 12 in Pope Park with music by Lorena Garay; July 13 in Goodwin