

TENTH ANNUAL  
**MEDIA  
THAT  
MATTERS**

**Uninsured in the Mississippi Delta** (5:17 min)

Directed by Katie Falkenberg

Produced by Katie Falkenberg

*Winner of the Human Rights Award*



### **About the Film**

At a time when the health care debate is at the forefront of the political agenda, *Uninsured in the Mississippi Delta* puts a human face on the struggles of the 46 million Americans surviving without health care.

The Mississippi Delta is one of the most impoverished and uninsured regions of the United States. The area also has soaring rates for diabetes, hypertension and stroke, and some of the highest mortality rates and lowest birth rates in the nation. The town of Greenville, Mississippi, in the heart of the Delta, has, on a per-capita basis, the highest number of uninsured households in the country. Contributing factors to this statistic include high unemployment rates, poverty, business owners who cannot afford health insurance for their workers, and agricultural jobs that are often only seasonal. Those who have jobs that pay minimum wage cannot afford health insurance on their own.

Howard Moncrief and Edward Smith are among those living in the Delta struggling without health insurance. Both of these men, putting the needs of their children and families before their own, have gone without vital health care and medicines. They simply could not afford them.

#### **Inspiration**

I had been following the debate on the health care bill in Congress, and was moved by the stories I had heard from those who were struggling without insurance while working on a photo and video project about a Remote Area Medical (RAM) free health care clinic in Appalachia the year before. I knew that this year, with the health care issue being at the forefront of this administration's agenda, I wanted to tell another story to put a human face with the statistics being talked about so frequently in the Capitol and on the news.

When I heard that 34% of the households in the impoverished Delta town of Greenville, Mississippi were living without health insurance, I knew that this was a story that needed to be told. As I began researching the story, I learned that the problem wasn't just concentrated in Greenville; it extended throughout the entire Mississippi Delta region into the rural areas where poverty was rampant and

there were few jobs.

Many of the folks who are patients at the two health care clinics I spent time in for this film—the Good Samaritan Health Clinic in Greenville, and the Tutwiler Clinic in Tutwiler—would go without the most basic and vital care if these clinics did not exist. This was a driving force behind my inspiration for this film: that, because of the cost of health care and insurance, people would have to go without the care they desperately need, were it not for these clinics.

Furthermore, it is not only the people in the Delta; it is the 46 million other Americans throughout the country.

### **Filmmaker Bios**

Katie Falkenberg is a freelance multimedia journalist based in Los Angeles, California.

She began her career photographing the 2004 presidential campaign from the battleground state of Ohio to the election and inauguration in Washington D.C. As a freelance photographer in D.C., Katie covered the White House and Capitol Hill.

From the fall of 2006 until the end of 2009, Katie was a staff photographer with The Washington Times where she worked on both national and international stories.

Her passion is working on human rights and issue-related stories, and she considers it a great privilege to tell the stories of people who may not have a chance to be heard otherwise.

Katie holds a B.A. in Studio Art from Warren Wilson College, and her photography and multimedia work have been awarded by Pictures of the Year International, the White House News Photographers Association, Editor & Publisher, and the National Press Photographers Association. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, Time, Rolling Stone, and Vanity Fair, among others.

For more of Katie's work, go to [www.katiefalkenbergphotography.com](http://www.katiefalkenbergphotography.com).

### **Take Action Links**

#### **Take Action with Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps**

(<http://www.ramusa.org/>)

Support the work of airborne relief corps volunteers providing vital and free healthcare to inhabitants in remote areas of the U.S. and around the world.

#### **Take Action with Tutwiler Clinic**

(<http://www.tutwilerclinic.org/community.html>)

Make a charitable donation to this local clinic and ensure that health care is made available to the Mississippi Delta community.

For more information about *Uninsured in the Mississippi Delta* and the other films from the tenth annual Media That Matters Film Festival, visit [www.mediathatmattersfest.org](http://www.mediathatmattersfest.org) or contact us at [festival@artsengine.net](mailto:festival@artsengine.net).

