

**Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
March 29, 2006  
Cover Page**

**1. Witness Names:**

Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, Sr., Baltimore Maryland, The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions; Director, Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery; Professor of Neurological Surgery; Professor of Oncology; Professor of Plastic Surgery.

Dr. Clifford T. Solomon; Annapolis, Maryland, Private Practice; Director, The Maryland Neurological Institute; Asst. Professor, University of Maryland Faculty; Asst. Professor of Neurosurgery, Johns Hopkins Medicine; Past Chair, Department of Surgery, Anne Arundel Medical Center.

**2. Hearing Date and Time:**

Wednesday, March 29, 2006, 2:00 P.M.

**3. Organization representing:**

Angels of the OR, Inc. (formerly The Benevolent Endowment Network Fund)

**4. Testimony Summary:**

As concerned physicians with comprehensive experience in pediatric and adult neurosurgery, we feel compelled to present testimony on the vast need for assistance to children and adults requiring life saving neurosurgical services who are uninsured, underinsured and/or have no ability to pay for these services. We are developing Angels of the OR to demonstrate that a cooperative program among medical specialists can be established to ensure that the specialized needs of patients are met. We believe a small investment of federal dollars combined with private donations being committed will launch this program. The result will not just be enabling the project to initiate life saving neurosurgery for uninsured and underinsured individuals, but begin a nationwide response to this crisis.

**5. Representatives of Angels of the OR attending the Witness Hearing, but not testifying:**

- a. Mrs. Harriet L. Finkelstein, Baltimore, MD, Treasurer to the Board of Directors of Angels of the OR, Inc.
- b. Robert M. Gray, Lutherville, MD, Consultant to the Board of Directors, Angels of the OR, Inc.
- c. Diana Bishop, Annapolis, MD, Practice Administrator, office of Dr. Clifford Solomon.
- d. Theodore Solomon, Hampstead, MD, Advisor to the Board of Directors, Angels of the OR.



1014 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
[www.AngelsoftheOR.org](http://www.AngelsoftheOR.org)



**Written Testimony submitted to the Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies**

**March 29, 2006**

Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, Sr. and Dr. Clifford T. Solomon, co-founders of Angels of the OR, Inc. are pleased to submit testimony describing the vast need for financial assistance to children and adults requiring life saving neurosurgical services who are uninsured, underinsured and/or have no ability to pay for these services.

The United States Department of Commerce reports a staggering statistic that “in 2004, 45.8 million people were without health insurance coverage, up from 45.0 million people in

2003.” The percentage and number of children (people under 18 years old) without health insurance in 2004 was 11.2 percent or 8.3 million. (Source: “Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2004”, U.S. Dept. of Commerce.)

1014 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
[www.AngelsoftheOR.org](http://www.AngelsoftheOR.org)

Decades ago physicians spent years in education and training so they could alleviate pain and suffering for their patients. A physician was able to accept a patient because of their medical need – not because of their ability to pay. They were specialists in providing care for their patients – but unfortunately that has changed. Today the physician is more than a care provider – they must become a specialist of paper shuffling and dealing with complicated reimbursement procedures.

As practicing surgeons, Dr. Carson and Dr. Solomon routinely experience patient and family situations that require life saving neurosurgery but the patient/family may not have medical insurance coverage or have the ability to pay. As a result, the patient may receive a surgical procedure by a surgeon who is not experienced with the required technique or there may be a delay in the surgical procedure that accelerates the severity of the condition. All too often these cases may demonstrate that:

1. The patient/family does not have medical insurance coverage;
2. The patient/family does not have the required insurance “within network” coverage accepted for the physician or hospital; or,
3. The patient/family does not have the ability to pay for the services.

Recently Dr. Carson, Director, Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, had a patient referred from a state outside of Maryland that required a delicate and complicated surgery. Neurosurgeons from the patient's home state referred the patient to Dr. Carson with acknowledgement that they did not have the experience to conduct the operation. The family had insurance coverage but the hospital could not accept the coverage – it did not fall within the network parameters. The family, already experiencing the stress of a child who required major surgery, now faced the dilemma that their insurance coverage did not provide help they required. The patient was referred back to its home state and the surgery was conducted by surgeons who were not experienced with the procedure. Subsequently, within a short period of time, the patient was referred back to Dr. Carson for the specialized surgery – and, it was successful.

Dr. Solomon, a neurosurgeon in private practice, received a “walk –in” patient that had been diagnosed with a tumor on the brain. Every medical institution the patient approached was unable to provide assistance because of the patient's lack of insurance. Dr. Solomon accepted the patient without regards to medical coverage or the patient's ability to pay. He provided the required surgery to remove the tumor and the patient is alive today. Recently Dr. Solomon received a letter from the patient's mother: “Dear Dr. Solomon – every day I say a prayer for you and thank GOD that he sent us to you. My son and I will never forget your kindness.”

Examples such as these have provided the impetus for Dr. Carson and Dr. Solomon to initiate Angels of the OR, an organization dedicated to providing funding assistance to patients requiring neurosurgery who may not have medical insurance, may be underinsured or have no

ability to pay. These examples are not isolated cases – neurosurgeons throughout the United States have experienced similar situations.

It is estimated that approximately 1/7 of our economy is health care related. The development of Angels of the OR will demonstrate that a cooperative program among medical specialists can be established to ensure that the specialized needs of patients are met. Angels of the OR will also demonstrate that the development of a funding base will ease the financial burden for patients/families that are not in a position to receive reimbursement or pay for the surgical services required. The ensuing result is a program that allows specialized physicians not only to maximize their talents for healing, but the program may also offer a comprehensive solution to our national issues to medical access and affordability.

Angels of the OR, Inc. (formerly The Benevolent Endowment Fund) is a 501 (c) 3 organization.

Information may be obtained by reviewing its website: [www.AngelsoftheOR.org](http://www.AngelsoftheOR.org) or by

contacting its office at 410-889-2070 or by emailing at [info@AngelsoftheOR.org](mailto:info@AngelsoftheOR.org).

## **Biography**

Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, Sr.

Dr. Benjamin Carson is the director of the division of pediatric neurosurgery and a professor of neurosurgery, oncology, plastic surgery, and pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. He is known the world over for his pioneering surgical techniques, particularly in working with children. Dr. Carson received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University and his Medical Degree from the University Of Michigan School Of Medicine.

As a child, Ben Carson dreamed of becoming a physician – and overcame dire poverty, low self-esteem and a ferocious temper to realize that dream. He credits his mother’s love, his perseverance and his deep religious faith for his spectacular rise to success.

While proud of his achievements – particularly in separating children joined at the head – Ben considers every case to be noteworthy; every patient to be of value. Patients have often commented on his gentle, reassuring manner, and his comforting demeanor.

Married to his wife, Candy, for more than 30 years, and the father of three sons, Ben has always been a strong advocate for children and families. He is president and co-founder of the Carson Scholars Fund which recognizes young people of all backgrounds for exceptional academic and humanitarian accomplishments. He has also written three books, *Gifted Hands*, *THINK BIG*, and *The Big Picture*, looking to provide inspiration and insight. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 published articles.

In 1997, Dr. Carson was a featured speaker at The National Prayer Breakfast. In 2001, he was named by CNN and *Time* as one of the nation’s 20 foremost physicians and scientists, and was selected by the Library of Congress as one of 89 “Living Legends” in 2001.

Ben deeply believes in using his talent to help others – a belief he is demonstrating once again as co-founder of Angels of the OR, Inc.

## **Biography**

Dr. Clifford T. Solomon

Dr. Clifford T. Solomon is a neurosurgeon and a member of the medical staffs of Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. He earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri and his medical degree from The Medical College of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

He completed a fellowship in neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a fellowship in neuro-oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Medical Center in New York as well as a fellowship in neurosurgery at the University of Zurich in Switzerland.

Cliff's interest in medicine began very early in his life. The son of a physician, he often joined his father as he made medical rounds at Johns Hopkins Hospital. This experience stimulated his interest in medicine and he soon developed an interest in neurology.

Cliff's surgical skills are rivaled only by his compassion. "Very giving and caring – exactly what you'd want in a surgeon," one patient said. A talented amateur magician, Cliff has been known to entertain young patients with sleight-of-hand (which also keeps his hands in top shape for delicate procedures).

Cliff grew alarmed by the number of patients who couldn't receive neurosurgery because of insurance or financial complications. His concern resulted in The International Institute for Neuroscience, designed to provide funds for patients in need.

One day, he was discussing the Institute with his colleague, Dr. Ben Carson. The two surgeons quickly realized that Dr. Carson's BEN Fund shared similar goals, and decided to merge their efforts, creating Angels of the OR.

Today, as co-founder of Angels of the OR, Cliff sees his dream becoming a reality: that patients won't be denied potentially life-saving neurosurgery because of insurance or financial problems.

Cliff is a devoted husband and father, married to Bernadette and the father of three children, Jacob, Tessa and Isabella.

## Federal Grant Disclosure

March 29, 2006

1. Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, Jr.:

None. Dr. Carson has not directly received federal grants during the fiscal years of 2004, 2005, 2006. The Institution that employs Dr. Carson, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, has received federal grants.

2. Dr. Clifford T. Solomon:

None.