



# Meeting Brief

## Forum on Current Health Care Reform Initiatives

*February 16, 2006*

---

On February 16<sup>th</sup> at the Governor Hotel in Portland, the Oregon Health Policy Commission and representatives from 10 Oregon health reform organizations and initiatives, along with several hundred members of the public, gathered to explore how the energy for reform can be better coordinated and supported. This brief provides an overview of the discussion that day. The OHPC wants to thank the forum participants, the interested public who attended the forum, and the Northwest Health Foundation for making the gathering possible through sponsorship of the venue.

### Discussion Overview

OHPC Chair, Kerry Barnett, opened the meeting by urging the participants and the Commission to focus the discussion on how we make concrete steps toward reforming the health care system and avoid further debate of the current system's problems. Recent public discussions on the state of our health care system have led to general agreement about what the problems are; the real work is to figure out how to move from the problems to an affordable system.

The goals of the meeting were to:

1. Foster a dialogue between some of the many groups that are working to build coalitions and reform the state's health care system.
2. Provide a forum for the Commissioners and interested members of the public to learn about the groups' activities and plans for the upcoming year.
3. Begin a process for building consensus and public will around policy changes that will truly make health care more affordable to families, businesses, and the state.

Meeting participants presented information about their organization's or initiative's plans for the upcoming year. There were some common themes among the efforts. Several are planning to build "blue-prints" or "road maps" for reform over the next year, with some of these efforts focusing on how the health care system is financed. Many are focused at least in part on engaging the public in the dialogue and all seek to build a collective will for true system reform.

Participants engaged in a spirited debate on the merits of incremental versus sweeping changes to the system which resolved into acknowledgement that both efforts should go forward simultaneously. Although participants' views might diverge on specific elements of reform, the group recognized that they have enough in common to engage in meaningful and sustained cooperation.

## How can we move forward together?

The first step of that cooperation should be to develop a common vocabulary and a shared message that articulates reform issues in a consistent, straightforward way. Several people pointed out that our conversations with the Oregon community need to pose better questions that compel us all to get specific about what we want out of our health care system and the compromises we are willing to make to get there.

By the end of the day, forum participants had agreed to meet throughout the rest of the year to keep one another informed, to work together whenever possible, and involve additional reform efforts and organizations. Initial ideas for cooperation included:

- Crafting a common health reform message to foster a shared understanding across the state.
- Coordinating community forums in a way that builds momentum for change at the local level.
- Combining working groups that share the same agenda.

**For more information on how this work is progressing, contact Gretchen Morley, OHPC Director, at 503-378-2422 ext. 411 or [gretchen.morley@state.or.us](mailto:gretchen.morley@state.or.us).**

### *OHPC Meeting Participants*

---

**Oregon Business Council's Healthcare Taskforce (Bill Kramer)** supports actions to give all Oregonians access to quality health care by creating a fair market where everyone is motivated to improve health, ensure quality, and reduce costs.

**Oregonians for Health Security (Maribeth Healey)** is hosting forums around the state to raise public awareness and involvement in health related ballot measures for November 2006.

**Oregon Health Action Campaign (Ellen Pinney)** is a coalition of individuals and organizations whose mission is to empower the consumer voice in the development of health systems that give all people access to the care they need, when they need it, from providers of their choice at an affordable cost. Its fall membership council asked the coalition to implement a strategy for translating the myriad of reform efforts into substantive legislative action in 2007.

**CodeBlueNow! (Kathleen O'Connor)** will build on the Oregon Health Decisions report and work with leaders to 1) create a vision for a total system focusing on desired outcomes, 2) educate citizens about the need for change, and 3) build grassroots support (a public will) for solutions.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Healthcare Summit (Senator Jackie Winters)** in December 2005 asked participants to articulate "what kind of system do we want in Oregon and what are we willing to pay for?" A spring 2006 follow-up work session is planned to continue this work.

**Oregon/Washington 100% Access Summit and the Delivery System Models Workgroup of the OHPC (Laura Brennan)** The Summit highlighted local health system collaborations underway in Oregon and Washington, shared lessons learned, and provided an opportunity to inform policy and policy makers of the needs and possibilities of local healthcare solutions.

## ***OHPC Meeting Participants (continued)***

**Foundation for Advancement of Community Healthcare (Craig Hostetler)** is working to identify solutions to challenges faced by the Oregon Health Plan and the core safety net. Six work groups came out of a forum held in November 2005 which will focus on: 1) what should the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) look like?, 2) expanding safety net capacity, 3) addressing health disparities, 4) engaging the business community on OHP reform, 5) building public will for health care reform, and 6) generating revenue to support low-income health care. The goal is to have two to three core solutions from each group by the summer, then possibly another conference to prepare for the legislative session.

**Archimedes Movement (Governor Kitzhaber)** asks "if anything were possible, how would we use the public money currently spent on health care in Oregon to design a system that maximizes the health of all Oregonians?" Root problems to healthcare access are outdated payment models and financial incentives. The organization believes the first step to system reform is to come to agreement on a common vision, and then to articulate principles that can guide the design of the new system. The movement will create a venue for meaningful engagement and dialogue for all to take part in this important work.

**Healthcare for All - Oregon (Mark Lindgren)** sees financing as the primary problem with the health care system. A 2008 ballot measure will be influenced by the Archimedes Movement. The project will educate voters on how health care is financed and what the obstacles are to reform. It will look at solutions in other countries in weighing the current reform ideas.

**Family Health & Wellness Act of 2006 (Rep. Billy Dalto)**, a short term solution to the health care coverage crisis, it would institute a dedicated 60 cent tobacco tax to fund health insurance for all uninsured children in Oregon and restore some enrollment in Oregon Health Plan Standard. The tobacco tax would raise about \$380 million in state and federal funds.

**Hope for Oregon Families, Ballot Initiative (Rep. Mitch Greenlick)** for November 2006 would amend the Oregon Constitution to establish that every Oregon resident has a right to affordable and effective health care and that it is the obligation of the State to make sure that right is realized.

**Prescription Drug Bulk Purchasing Program Expansion, Ballot Initiative (Sen. Bill Morrisette)** for November 2006 would allow any Oregon resident without prescription drug coverage to participate in the Oregon Prescription Drug Program.

**Make Healthcare Work Plan (Alice Dale)** State Employees International Union (SEIU) is sponsoring a proposal to increase public input into healthcare service and infrastructure planning and spending. The plan would create a community health care planning board to assess community needs and develop a comprehensive community health care plan. The board would send its recommendations to any existing State Certificate of Need programs.

**Healthy Oregon Plan, Ballot Initiative (Evan Saulino)** for November 2006. Oregonians for Progress is a diverse group of citizens who want to empower Oregonians to find solutions to the health care crisis.