



March 30, 2009

The following was compiled from releases by the White House, Governor Schwarzenegger's Office and NACo:

Last month, President Obama invited a bipartisan group of lawmakers, physicians, health care executives, business leaders, and Americans from across the country to the White House for a forum on health reform. Our own Supervisor Valerie Brown, Sonoma County was the only non-federal elected official to attend the White House Forum.

The President expressed his intention to enact comprehensive health reform by the end of the year. At the event, the President announced that the White House would be teaming up with a bipartisan group of governors from around the country to host regional forums on health reform.

On April 6, California will host the last of five regional events held across the country to continue the productive conversation that began in Washington, D.C. The Western Regional White House Forum on Health Care Reform will identify concrete strategies to lower costs, expand coverage, and improve the health of Americans.

The President has vowed that the health reform process will be different in his Administration – an open, inclusive, and transparent process where all ideas are encouraged and all parties work together to find a solution that will result in affordable, high-quality health care for all Americans. Skyrocketing health care costs for families, businesses, and government are unsustainable, and health reform is essential to get our nation's economy back on track and improve the health status of Americans.

The Obama Administration and the Governor's Office are in the process of choosing the individuals to participate in the "invitation only" session. Several California officials are on the list for consideration.

The Forum will include a cross-section of citizens from all walks of life, including local officials; health care providers, physicians, patients, hospitals, medical researchers, drug companies, and health plans; businesses; and the elderly. The forum will be designed to solicit input from participants regarding numerous issues related to health care.

Generally the sessions have focused on costs, access, quality, and systemic problems in the health care system. The stories told by participants, emphasizing increased costs for insurance and prescription drugs, denial of

health care due to pre-existing conditions, inadequate coverage of medical conditions such as mental health, etc.; are being compiled by the White House to 'make the case' for health care reform.

No agenda or format has been released yet. We will share that information with you as it becomes available from the White House. In the meantime, you can share your questions or ideas for upcoming health care forums by completing the information at this link: www.healthreform.gov/regionalhealthforum.html.

Paul McIntosh
Executive Director
California State Association of Counties
1100 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 327-7500 x506
(916) 441-5507 - Fax
pmcintosh@counties.org
www.csac.counties.org