

SAVE THE DATE

Federally-Appointed Commission: The Citizen's Health Care Working Group

NATIONAL HOTSPOT PARTNER NIGHT

Wednesday, March 22

5:00 - 8:00 pm

U.W. Madison Campus

**sponsored by the Big Ten Conference and
the Association of Schools of Public Health**

On Wednesday evening March 22, 2006, from 5-8pm CST, Wisconsin will participate in a multi-site actual and virtual community meeting focused on the challenges of cost, access, and quality of health care. Other sites include each member of the Big Ten conference and each School of Public Health (SPH). The University of Michigan, which is convening the event, will host members of the Working Group and will webcast the event, while the individual universities will hook up to the webcast via satellite and convene faculty participants with expertise in health care access, quality, and financing. All sites will host community audiences. (See attached material for more detail.)

The U.S. Congress created the Citizens' Health Care Working Group as part of the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003. The Working Group is charged with engaging the American public in a dialogue that will help find solutions to the shortcomings in the current health care system. This legislation also charges the President and Congress to respond to the recommendations that the Working Group will make after hearing from the American public. Five congressional committees with jurisdiction in this matter will hold hearings on the recommendations.

On February 28, 2005 the U.S. Comptroller General announced the appointment of 14 individuals to the nonpartisan federal commission (list of members attached). Since that time, the Working Group has heard expert testimony in public hearings in Virginia, Mississippi, Utah, Texas, Massachusetts, and Oregon. In October, it published a Report to the American People that summarizes what is known about how much is spent on health care in the US, where that money comes from, where it goes, and what it pays for. This report laid the ground work for the next phase of the commission's work -- engaging the American public in an informed national public debate about the services and coverage, how to improve the U.S. health system, and how or what they are willing to pay.

In the next 6 months, the Working Group will hear from millions of Americans through several venues, including community meetings (virtual and actual), interviews, on-line surveys and free phone access.

The March 22 event is part of this process. The panel of national Working Group members in Ann Arbor can answer questions about the material presented in their report. They, along with local faculty at the participating sites, will answer questions from members of the audiences. Questions can also be submitted by phone or in real time via the internet. During this multisite "virtual" community meeting, participants can hear questions and comments from participants all over the country. **The discussion will contribute to the content of the Working Group's final report and recommendations to The President and the U.S. Congress.**

Watch your email for more information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the event or your potential participation, please contact Donna Friedsam at dafriedsam@wisc.edu.