

**CITIZENS HEALTH CARE  
WORKING GROUP  
HEALTH CARE THAT WORKS  
FOR ALL AMERICANS**

**Rural Listening Sessions Summary Report  
Clarksdale, MS  
April 11, 2006**

**SPONSORS:**

**Citizens Health Care Working Group  
Mississippi State University Extension Service**

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**Citizens' Health Care Working Group**

**HEALTH CARE  
THAT WORKS FOR ALL  
AMERICANS**

**Mississippi State  
UNIVERSITY  
Extension  
SERVICE**

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Percent	Total	A
		<b>Are you male or female?</b>
21.4%	3	1 Male
78.6%	11	2 Female

Percent	Total	B
		<b>How old are you?</b>
0.0%	0	1 Under 25
21.4%	3	2 25 to 44
57.1%	8	3 45 to 64
21.4%	3	4 Over 65

Percent	Total	C
		<b>Are you Hispanic or Latino?</b>
0.0%	0	1 Yes
100.0%	14	2 No
0.0%	0	3 No Response

Percent	Total	D
		<b>Which of these groups best represents your race?</b>
64.3%	9	1 White
35.7%	5	2 Black or African American
0.0%	0	3 Asian
0.0%	0	4 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
0.0%	0	5 American Indian or Alaska Native
0.0%	0	6 Other
0.0%	0	7 Decline to answer

Percent	Total	E
		<b>What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?</b>
0.0%	0	1 Elementary (grades 1 to 8)
7.1%	1	2 Some high school
7.1%	1	3 High school graduate or GED
0.0%	0	4 Some college
0.0%	0	5 Associate Degree
21.4%	3	6 Bachelor's Degree
64.3%	9	7 Graduate or professional degree
0.0%	0	8 Decline to answer

Percent	Total	F
		<b>What is your primary source of health care coverage?</b>
71.4%	10	1 Employer-based insurance
0.0%	0	2 Self-purchased insurance
0.0%	0	3 Veterans'
21.4%	3	4 Medicare
0.0%	0	5 Medicaid
0.0%	0	6 Other
7.1%	1	7 None
0.0%	0	8 Not sure

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Percent	Total	G
		<b>What is your employment status?</b>
0.0%	0	1 Self-employed
78.6%	11	2 Employed - working full time
0.0%	0	3 Employed - working part-time
0.0%	0	4 Not employed / currently looking for work
0.0%	0	5 Homemaker
21.4%	3	6 Other

Percent	Total	H
		<b>Which one of these statements do you think best describes the U.S. health care system today?</b>
50.0%	7	1 It is in a state of crisis
42.9%	6	2 It has major problems
0.0%	0	3 It has minor problems
7.1%	1	4 It does not have any problems
0.0%	0	5 No opinion

Percent	Total	I
		<b>Which one of the following do you think is the MOST important reason to have health insurance?</b>
42.9%	6	1 To pay for everyday medical expenses
57.1%	8	2 To protect against high medical costs
0.0%	0	3 No opinion

**Total J**  
**As we consider ways to improve our health care system, what values and/or principles do you believe are fundamental? And which of the following values/principles is most important to you?**

Rating	SESSION A
9.1	W/o regard to who you are
8.8	Affordability
8.6	Competent professionals
9.1	Safe, high quality care
8.7	Preventive services
9.2	Access to providers
8.6	Mental health parity (mental health equal to physical health)
8.5	Access to insurance
8.8	Minimum standard of care regardless of pay source
7.7	Patient driven decision process
7.5	Case management (enabling support services)

Rating	SESSION B
9.8	Access
9.3	Affordability
9.3	Individual responsibility
9.0	Education (totally inclusive of all concerned parties)
8.0	Preventive services
8.3	School priorities by teachers include health related topics
8.0	Availability

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**Percent Total K**

**Should it be public policy that all Americans have affordable health care coverage?  
[By public policy we mean that the stated public goal is set out in federal or state law.]**

92.9%	13	1 Yes
7.1%	1	2 No

**Percent Total L**

**Which of the following statements most accurately represents your views?**

7.1%	1	1 Providing coverage based on who you are (for example, people who have coverage through their employers or people who qualify for public programs because of age or because they are poor) as is the case currently
92.9%	13	2 Defining a level of services for everyone, regardless of their status, but with coverage assured only for that defined set of services

**M-x**

**It would be difficult to define a level of services for everyone. A health plan that many people view as “typical” now covers these types of benefits, many of which are subject to copayments and deductibles:**

**Preventive Care—screenings, routine physicals, influenza and pneumonia  
- immunizations, well child care, limited dental care**

**Physicians’ Care—inpatient services, outpatient surgery, related tests, home  
- and office visits, medical emergency care**

**- Chiropractic Care**

**- Maternity Care**

**- Prescription Drugs**

**- Hospital/Facility Care—inpatient and outpatient services**

**- Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy**

**Mental Health and Substance Abuse—inpatient and outpatient facility and  
- professional care**

**How would a basic package compare to this “typical” plan?**

**M-1**

**Of the most frequent answers the group gave, what would you add?**

**Rating**

**SESSION A**

7.1	Durable medical equipment
8.0	Vision care
7.7	Nursing home/long-term care (including alternative options)
7.5	Minimum restorative dental care
7.4	Complete outpatient service coverage
7.8	Limited catastrophic illness
6.6	Equal mental health coverage (same % coverage as physical)
5.8	Hospice care
6.4	Unlimited (complete) prescription coverage
7.0	Complete recommended treatment coverage

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<b>Rating</b>	<b>SESSION B</b>
8.0	Oral health care
9.0	Health education
4.0	Ophthalmology care
7.3	Prescription drugs as per formulary - no experimental drugs, traditional medicine
9.0	Complete catastrophic care management and treatment

**M-2**

**Of the most frequent answers the group gave, what would you take out?**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>SESSION A</b>
8.2	Chiropractic care
6.1	Substance abuse coverage

<b>Rating</b>	<b>SESSION B</b>
5.3	Chiropractic care (limit amount)
5.5	Home visits (limit amount)

**Rating N**

**On a scale of 1 (no input) to 10 (exclusive input), how much input should each of the following have in deciding what is in a basic benefit package?**

6.5	<b>N-1</b> Government
7.9	<b>N-2</b> Medical professionals
4.8	<b>N-3</b> Insurance companies
6.5	<b>N-4</b> Employers
7.7	<b>N-5</b> Consumers

**O-1**

**In getting health care, what is most important to you?**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Session A</b>
9.0	Competent care; correct diagnoses
9.3	Affordability
8.1	Safety issues (prevention of hospital borne infections, etc.)
8.2	Having enough providers
7.4	Timely appointments
8.1	Continuity of care
7.8	Distance to provider
7.0	Respect for patient opinions; respect for the competence level of patients
7.9	Adequate and accessible facilities

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Session B</b>
9.5	Good basic coverage
9.8	Access
8.8	Choice
8.8	Continuity of records - main issue behind electronic records
9.8	Quality of care

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<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>P</b>
		<b>Should everyone be required to enroll in basic health care coverage - either private or public?</b>
85.7%	12	1 Yes
14.3%	2	2 No
<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Q</b>
		<b>Should some people be responsible for paying more than others?</b>
92.9%	13	1 Yes
7.1%	1	2 No
<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>R</b>
		<b>What criteria should be used for making some people pay more?</b>
42.3%	11	1 Family size
34.6%	9	2 Health behaviors
23.1%	6	3 Income
0.0%	0	4 None
<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>S</b>
		<b>Should public policy continue to use tax rules to encourage employer-based health insurance?</b>
71.4%	10	1 Yes
28.6%	4	2 No
<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>T</b>
		<b>Do you think government resources should be used to continue current programs that cover some people who can't otherwise afford it?</b>
92.9%	13	1 Yes
7.1%	1	2 No

**U-x**

**What should the responsibilities of individuals and families be in paying for health care?**

**Rating**

**Session A**

- 8.4 **U-1** Sharing of costs with the government and employers
- 7.1 **U-2** Help pay for insurance based on ability to pay (sliding scale)
- 8.6 **U-3** Adhere to age-appropriate recommended screenings/tests
- 8.7 **U-4** Health equity - healthier behaviors, lifestyles, teaching children healthy behaviors

**Rating**

**Session B**

- 7.0 **U-1** Co-pay
- 7.0 **U-2** Each participating household should contribute money to the pot
- 9.8 **U-3** Everyone should receive education (nutrition, education, etc.)
- 8.3 **U-4** Consequences for unhealthy behaviors
- 9.8 **U-5** Incentives for adoption of healthy lifestyles

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**Percent      Total      W**

**How much more would you personally be willing to pay in a year (in premiums, taxes, or through other means) to support efforts that would result in every American having access to affordable, high quality health care coverage and services?**

21.4%	3	1 \$0
21.4%	3	2 \$1 - \$100
0.0%	0	3 \$100 - \$299
14.3%	2	4 \$300 - \$999
14.3%	2	5 \$1000 or more
28.6%	4	6 Don't know

**Rating      X-x**

**On a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high), please rate each of the following public spending priorities to reach the goal of health care that works for all Americans.**

- 8.9      **X-1** Guaranteeing that there are enough health care providers, especially in areas such as inner cities & rural areas
- 9.3      **X-2** Investing in public health programs to prevent disease, promote healthy lifestyles, and protect the public in the event of epidemics or disasters
- 8.6      **X-3** Guaranteeing that all Americans have health insurance
- 7.9      **X-4** Funding the development of computerized health information to improve the quality & efficiency of health care
- 8.4      **X-5** Funding programs that help eliminate problems in access to or quality of care for minorities
- 8.3      **X-6** Funding biomedical & technological research that can lead to advancements in the treatment & prevention of disease
- 8.9      **X-7** Guaranteeing that all Americans get health care when they need it, through public safety net" programs (if they can not afford it)."
- 8.9      **X-8** Preserving Medicare & Medicaid

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**Rating Z-x**

**If you believe it is important to ensure access to affordable, high quality health care coverage and services for all Americans, which of these proposals would you suggest for doing this? Please rate each of the following proposals on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high).**

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 5.4 | <b>Z-1</b> Offer uninsured Americans income tax deductions, credits, or other financial assistance to help them purchase of private health insurance on their own.                     |
| 7.4 | <b>Z-2</b> Expand state government programs for low-income people (eg. Medicaid & S-CHIP) to provide coverage for more people without health insurance.                                |
| 4.3 | <b>Z-3</b> Rely on free-market competition among doctors, hospitals, other health care providers and insurance companies rather than having government define benefits and set prices. |
| 8.3 | <b>Z-4</b> Open up enrollment in national federal programs like Medicare or the federal employees' health benefit program  |
| 7.7 | <b>Z-5</b> Expand current tax incentives available to employers & their employees to encourage employers to offer insurance to more workers & families                                 |
| 6.4 | <b>Z-6</b> Require businesses to offer health insurance to their employees   |
| 8.2 | <b>Z-7</b> Expand neighborhood health clinics  |
| 7.3 | <b>Z-8</b> Create a national health insurance program, financed by taxpayers, in which all Americans would get their insurance   |
| 8.2 | <b>Z-9</b> Require that all Americans enroll in basic health care coverage, either private or public   |
| 7.7 | <b>Z-10</b> Increase flexibility afforded states in how they use federal funds for state programs (such as Medicaid and S-CHIP) to maximize coverage                                   |

**What should be done to slow the growth of health care costs in America?**

**Rating**

**SESSION A**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 8.6 | Promote healthy behaviors/offer incentives for healthy choices                  |
| 7.7 | Preventive care and education   |
| 7.2 | Penalize unhealthy behaviors (vice taxes that will fund the health care system) |
| 7.8 | Alternatives to institutionalization or long-term care                          |
| 8.1 | Streamline health care financing process  |
| 7.4 | Electronic health records to reduce redundancy                                  |
| 7.1 | Cap drug costs  |
| 7.2 | Standard fees for services regardless of location and payer                     |
| 5.0 | Educate physician regarding the dysfunction of the health care system           |
| 5.9 | Malpractice litigation caps/tort reform   |
| 6.3 | Eliminate practice of defensive medicine  |
| 7.1 | Reduce/eliminate unnecessary tests  |

**Rating**

**SESSION B**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 7.5 | Price controls on drug companies                            |
| 8.3 | Alter tax rules for drug marketers (Merckettes – drug reps) |
| 9.0 | Incentives for healthy behaviors – providers and consumers  |
| 9.5 | Adopt best practices for treatment                          |
| 8.5 | Increase competition in all health care sectors             |
| 8.8 | Education of physicians                                     |
| 6.3 | Continual evaluation of best practice systems               |