

# Samueli Institute Lead News Story

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## The Latest News on the WIN Initiative

### March- April 2009: White House Regional Forums on Health Reform

Working with Democratic and Republican Governors across the country, the White House has put together five White House Regional Forums on Health Reform. The forums bring together Americans across the region, key health care stakeholders, and elected officials from both sides of the aisle to discuss what must be done to change our health care system. Completed forums took place in Michigan, Vermont, Iowa, and North Carolina.

A few key concerns that arose out of the first four community discussions were how to lower high medical costs, provide affordable health insurance to all Americans, and teach as well as practice wellness and prevention as an integral part of health care.

Participants stressed the importance of a fast reform of health care, often times citing the increasing number of families that must choose between paying for medical bills or paying for basic life necessities, such as food or shelter. Nancy Ann Deparle, Director of the WH Office of Health Reform, as well as White House Director of Domestic Policy, Melody Barnes, assured attendees that health care is a priority for President Obama. The President hopes to enact health reform legislation by the end of this year.

The last forum will be held in Los Angeles, California, on April 6th, time TBD.

Details are available at <http://www.healthreform.gov/whitehouseforums.html>

### March 31, 2009: Report delivered to Obama from the Health Care Community Discussions

A Report from the December 2008 Health Care Community Discussions was delivered to President Obama. The overarching report summarizes the main concerns and suggestions collected from over 3,200 group reports that were submitted for review by the President's transition team. The Samueli Institute hosted a Community Discussion on 12/29/08 that included over 150 participants; details and a full report are available <http://www.siib.org/news/news-home/WIN-Home/CommunityDiscussion.html> .

After analyzing the information, volunteers found many similarities in identified concerns and solutions offered by the group reports. Concerns centered around four themes: Cost (health insurance premiums, prescription drugs, overall cost of the system), Access (access denial due to pre-existing conditions, poor access to services, inadequate coverage, etc.), Quality (concerns with the overall system, overuse of services, medical errors), and the System (link between employment and insurance, system's complexity, lack of focus on prevention, coverage gaps).

Suggested solutions stemmed from four topics: Principles for a Reformed US Health Care System, Roles in a Reformed US Health Care System, Specific Suggestions, and Suggestions for Future Engagement.

The report is meant to show the commitment by the Administration to enact health reform that is responsive to Americans' needs.

Read the full report: <http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/index.html>

## February 26, 2009: HELP Hearing

The Senate HELP committee held a second hearing on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009, titled, “Integrative Care: A Pathway to a Healthier Nation” largely reinforced what was discussed at the “Principles of Integrated Health” hearing held earlier that week, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The panel included Dr. Mehmet Oz, Dr. Mark Hyman, Dr. Dean Ornish, and Dr. Andy Weil. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) chaired the hearing and other Senators in attendance were Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY). The discussions revolved around implementing a grassroots education of younger generations on health, wellness and prevention, and the creation of a Health Advisory Council in the White House or Congress. All panelists advocated for the creation of a White House or Congress health policy group as presented in the WIN document.

If you would like to read the witness’ testimony or watch the streaming video, please see the website address below:

[http://help.senate.gov/Hearings/2009\\_02\\_26/2009\\_02\\_26.html](http://help.senate.gov/Hearings/2009_02_26/2009_02_26.html)

## For More Information

Please visit the [Wellness Initiative for the Nation \(WIN\) page](#)<sup>5</sup> for the latest updates on the WIN, to download the latest version of the WIN document, and to read background information on this effort.

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