



## Viewpoints

Wednesday, April 12, 2006; Posted: 11:15 a.m. EDT

# Cincinnati a stop for national health care dialogue

**BRANDON WIERS** | COMMUNITY PRESS GUEST COLUMNIST

Health care costs are rising uncontrollably, creating hardships for many Americans by pricing them out of the market altogether, and for small businesses, forcing them to cut back on the benefits provided to their employees.

Something needs to change.

**ADVERTISEMENT** Our community has a unique opportunity to be a part of the change we'd like to see in the health care system on Saturday, April 29. That's the day the national health care dialogue making its way around the country has a stop at the Cinergy Center downtown. Our region will be one of only a few dozen where the Citizens' Health Care Working Group has meetings scheduled to learn what Americans want and need from our health care system.

The Citizens' Health Care Working Group, a 15-member committee selected by the comptroller general of the United States, is charged with holding these meetings with ordinary citizens. From the discussions, the Citizens' Health Care Working Group will develop recommendations to present to Congress and the president. Hundreds of residents from Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana are expected to participate in the Cincinnati Health Care Community Meeting, making this meeting one of the largest in the series.

Participants will engage in small-group discussions of about 10 people led by a facilitator and will vote anonymously using electronic keypads on key themes that arise from across the small group discussions.

The dialogue at the Cinergy Center that Saturday will follow the same agenda other communities have used in tackling the tough questions on this issue. Specifically:

- What health care benefits and services should be provided?
- How does the American public want health care delivered?
- How should health care coverage be financed?
- What trade-offs are the American public willing to make in either benefits or financing to ensure access to affordable, high-quality health care coverage and services?

### MEETING TIME

The Citizens' Health Care Working Group Cincinnati Health Care Community meeting will be from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 29, at the Cinergy Center. Free meals, child care and parking will be provided. Space is limited and advance registration is highly recommended. To register, call 866-324-7949 or visit [www.citizenshealthcare.gov/register](http://www.citizenshealthcare.gov/register).

Answers of local people to these questions will help develop the content of the message the Citizens' Health Care Working Group will deliver to Washington. Federal law requires Congress to hold hearings on the recommendations. Your voice will be heard.

The need for changes in American health care is long overdue. Friends and neighbors, please join me in helping our community and our country take a giant step in the right direction. The United States government is our ultimate audience, making this our biggest hope for large-scale change.

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