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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HOSTS 22 UNIVERSITIES IN NATIONWIDE DISCUSSION ON HEALTH CARE

Citizens' recommendations to be considered by Congress, White House

Washington, D.C. – The University of Michigan will host an online community meeting entitled, “What Is Your Health Worth? A National Conversation on Health Care” This **live web cast** will take place Wednesday, March 22, 2006, from 7 pm to 9 pm. Twenty-three Universities and Schools of Public Health will hold local meetings and participate in the video hook up to the web cast. Members of the community are invited to these local meetings. This web cast is part of the more than 30 community meetings sponsored by the Citizens' Health Care Working Group, being held nationwide which engages citizens in a dialogue on the health care system in America. Those interested in physically attending the event may go to Gerald R. Ford Library and Museum, on University of Michigan's North Campus.

The web cast virtual community meeting will feature a multimedia presentation that provides information on the nation's health care system including problems related to cost, quality, and access to care. This will be followed by more focused discussions. Participants will share their ideas about how to improve the health care system. “A primary goal of the Working Group is to engage the public in an informed dialogue,” stated Catherine McLaughlin Director of the University of Michigan's Economic Research Initiative on the Uninsured and member of the Citizens' Health Care Working Group.

Panelists include:

--- Mary Sue Coleman, President of the University of Michigan. Coleman co-chaired the Institute of Medicine's Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance, which issued recommendations in 2004 about how to extend coverage to more citizens.

--- Pat Maryland, President of St. Vincent Hospitals and Health Services Inc. in central Indiana and a member of the Working Group.

--- Catherine McLaughlin, Professor of health management and policy at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and Director of the U-M's Economic Research Initiative on the Uninsured. McLaughlin is a member of the Citizens' Health Care Working Group.

--- Deborah Stehr, a full-time care-giver for her adult son, Jonathan, who has cerebral palsy and a member of the Working Group

--- Kenneth Warner, Dean of the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Warner has spent decades researching the effects of tobacco control policies.

“We hope that all citizens will find this virtual community meeting a terrific opportunity to find out about the big issues in health care today and begin to discuss their own concerns,” offered George Grob, Executive Director of the Citizens' Health Care Working Group.

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All are invited to participate in several different ways:

1. Attend one of the over 20 Schools holding meetings that will participate directly in the live exchange during the web cast (see the attached list).
2. Watch the live web cast on March 22nd at <http://www.umich.edu/healthmeeting>
3. Continue the Online Dialogue– The web cast kicks off two weeks of the nation’s online discussions (from March 22 through April 5) about health care. Americans are invited to add their voice to the debate by sharing their comments on the online **Discussion Forums** or by starting their own **Citizen’s Blogs** at www.citizenshealthcare.gov, under “Communicate.”
4. Go to the **Public Comment Center** at www.citizenshealthcare.gov and answer questions about the health care system and what matters to you.

The Citizens’ Health Care Working Group, a nonpartisan group authorized by the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003, is charged with listening to the views of the American people and developing recommendations for the President and Congress to provide U.S. citizens with “Health Care that Works for All Americans.” The *Health Report to the American People*, was released in October and serves as a basis to engage the American people in a dialogue on health care access, cost and quality issues. The Working Group consists of 15 members --14 citizens of diverse backgrounds from across the country, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

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