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Citizens' Health Care Working Group Announces First Round of Community Meetings

Washington, DC, December 15, 2005 – The Citizens' Health Care Working Group – mandated in the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act – today announced its first round of upcoming community meetings on how to make health care work for all Americans. Fifteen initial meetings will be held nationwide beginning in January 2006. The first round of cities and meeting dates are as follows:

Kansas City, MO (1/17)
Memphis, TN (2/11)
Seattle, WA (2/25)
Indianapolis, IN (3/11)
New York, NY (4/22)

Orlando, FL (1/24)
Charlotte, NC (2/18)
Denver, CO (2/27)
Detroit, MI (3/18)
Des Moines, IA (4/8)

Baton Rouge, LA (1/26)
Miami, FL (2/22)
Los Angeles, CA (3/4)
Phoenix, AZ (3/25)
Chicago, IL (TBA)

“The American health care system has significant problems when it comes to increasing costs, unreliable quality and inconsistent access to care. The Working Group is inviting the American people to take part in an unprecedented effort, where they become part of the dialogue, and provide feedback on what needs to happen and what tough choices they are willing to make so that the system works for all Americans,” said Randall L. Johnson, Chair of the Citizens' Health Care Working Group and Director, Human Resources Strategic Initiatives, Motorola.

The 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, along with, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. To receive a copy of the *Health Report to the American People* or other materials concerning the community meetings please contact C. Chic Smith above.

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Editor's note: The Citizens' Health Care Working Group is an independent body whose members were selected by the Comptroller General of the United States. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality provides administrative support as directed by the Medicare Modernization Act.