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BILLINGS JOINS NATIONAL DISCUSSION ON HEALTH CARE

Citizens' recommendations to be considered by Congress, White House

Washington, D.C. – The Citizens' Health Care Working Group will host a community dialogue on health care in America in Billings, MT, on **Friday, April 21st**, from 8:00 am - 12: 00 noon, MetraPark Exhibit Hall in the Arena Building, 308 6th Ave. N., Billings, MT 59103. This event is free and open to the public, but registration is requested. Registration is available online at www.citizenshealthcare.gov. Onsite registration is also available.

"People in Billings and all of Montana share the concern of citizens throughout the nation about the need to make health care work for all Americans," stated Catherine McLaughlin, a professor at the University of Michigan, where she also serves as the Director of the Economic Research Initiative on the Uninsured. Professor McLaughlin is also a member of the Citizens' Health Care Working Group. "This forum provides an important opportunity for members of this community to join thousands of citizens from other communities all across the country who are sharing their ideas for improvement with the President and the U.S. Congress."

The community meetings feature a multimedia presentation that provides information on the nation's health care system followed by moderated discussion of what health care services should be provided, how they should be delivered and financed, and trade-offs Americans are willing to make to improve the system. In addition, community members are encouraged to share their opinions and views by using the Public Comment Center, the Citizens' Blogs and Discussion Forums at www.citizenshealthcare.gov. Reports from completed meetings are also available.

This community meeting is one of three dozen taking place throughout the nation. At the conclusion of the community meetings, the Working Group will develop recommendations which the President will review and on which five Congressional Committees will hold hearings.

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, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

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