

August 28, 2006

From: Neil Calman, MD  
The Institute for Urban Family Health  
New York City

To: Randall L. Johnson, Chair  
Citizens' Health Care Working Group  
701 Wisconsin Avenue Suite 575  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Mr. Johnson:

As President and CEO of the Institute for Urban Family Health and its ten community health centers in the Bronx and Manhattan, I strongly support the efforts of the Citizens' Health Care Working Group (CHCWG) to include citizen input in legislation to improve access to quality health care for all.

However, I am writing you today to express my deep concern regarding one aspect of the second proposal in the Interim Recommendations made at the Working Group meeting held in New York City on April 22.

Specifically, the recommendation to "expand and modify the FQHC concept to accommodate" other providers could remove or reduce the federally qualified health center community board requirement. This recommendation departs significantly from the goal of health centers of ensuring a community voice in the provision of services, and undermines existing patient democracies.

My colleagues who attended the meeting reported that modification of FQHC statutes was not a part of the discussion or recommendations made at this meeting. I am concerned about their inclusion when they were not addressed in the community meetings.

As an advocate for community-based, high quality and affordable health care, I ask you to remove this recommendation and shift your support to build upon the successes of community-governed health centers by protecting their community boards.

Sincerely,

Neil Calman, MD  
President and CEO