

LISTENING TOUR SUMMARIES

Day 1: Kansas City/Leavenworth/Atchison Tour

July 25, 2007

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (Overland Park)

- *Around 40-50 attendees representing businesses*
- Mixed feelings about incremental versus comprehensive reform; Kansas more adept to incremental steps, but comprehensive might bring about the most significant improvements.
- Support for using Health Information Technology to foster public reporting and transparency; it will improve quality, actively engage consumers, and drive down costs.
- Support for employee wellness programs, but recognize limitations and barriers for small businesses.
- Health reform should focus on most at-risk populations.

Silver City Health Clinic (Kansas City)

- *Around 5-7 attendees; uninsured patients and clinic staff*
- Many employers do not offer health benefits, which dissuades individuals from seeking care. Private and individual markets are too expensive.
- Medical bills too burdensome; minimum wage workers unable to afford health insurance.
- Health insurance needs to be affordable to everyone. Include all health care costs when determining what is affordable (e.g., premiums, deductibles, prescriptions, etc.)
- Need more promotion for existing programs and facilities that help the uninsured. Current safety net system is inadequate; not enough doctors and volunteers, which makes for long wait times.

Cushing Hospital (Leavenworth)

- *Around 20-30 attendees; health care providers and administrators*
- Success of health reform dependent on access to providers, including equipment and facilities needed to provide care.
- Need more education and advertisements for where people can get free or reduced cost health care.
- Promote preventive care, especially in adults and individuals with chronic conditions in order to reduce expensive emergency care.

United Methodist Church (Atchison)

- *Around 5-10 attendees from this congregation.*
- Mixed feelings about the state's role in health reform.
- Increasing competition and making prices transparent will reduce health care costs. Standardize paperwork in order to reduce administration expenses.

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State Self Insurance Fund:
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- More flexibility needed in program and benefit design.
 - Need for better public education on navigating the health care system.
 - Integrate prevention and wellness programs into schools and promote personal responsibility.
 - Provide more affordable coverage for young adults.
 - Do not support employer mandates due to potential adverse effects on small businesses and part-time jobs.
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Day 2: Wichita Tour

July 26, 2007

Center for Health and Wellness

- *Around 30-40 attendees representing consumers*
- Redesign systems to incorporate prevention: reimburse doctors for providing preventive services; create walking/bike paths; implement worksite wellness programs, etc.
- Chronic illnesses are a major concern; need more funding and advertisements for new and existing programs. Create incentives for people to seek care.
- Need for more public health education (nutrition and exercise); target children and adults via schools and worksites.
- Small businesses need most assistance in accessing affordable coverage.
- Do not support increased taxes.

KU School of Medicine (Wichita Campus)

- *Around 15 attendees representing faculty*
- Need for more incentives to get medical students into primary care professions, especially in rural areas.
- Pay doctors for providing preventive services; limit the amount of out-of-pocket costs for prevention services. Shifting system to prevention will take a long time to see results; focus on obesity and tobacco.
- Need for mental health reform.
- Need better reimbursements (Medicare and Medicaid) to increase access to providers.

Kansas Association of Health Underwriters

- *Around 25 attendees representing association members*
- Lower cost of high risk pool in order to get more participation.
- Need less restrictions/mandates for insurance; they are stifling competition.
- Need more advertisements for the small business insurance tax credit.
- Health care system in Kansas is NOT broken; use existing models and instead focus on lowering costs (e.g., Wal-Mart model for lowering prescription drug costs).
- Promote personal responsibility and prevention with incentives (e.g., worksite wellness programs).
- Safety-net system is a perverse incentive to remain uninsured.

Central Christian Church

- *Around 10 attendees from this congregation*
- Focus on substance abuse patients; lower cost of prescriptions, improve employer support for utilizing substance abuse services; make insurance more affordable.
- Start prevention efforts at an early age; offer incentives for healthy behaviors.
- Promote “patient-centered” care to increase patient-provider interactions
- Need for better integrated care so that all of the patient’s doctors are communicating.

Day 3: Wellington/Winfield/El Dorado Tour

July 27, 2007

Wellington Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 20 attendees representing businesses*
- Educate children (schools) on nutrition and exercise in order to prevent diseases.
- Support for a smoking ban.
- Too difficult for small businesses to find affordable coverage; use Chambers of Commerce as a vehicle for group insurance. Create larger pools through the state; offer tax credits.
- Focus on long-term care reform; it's too expensive.
- Educate parents on navigating the health system and prevention.

Sumner Regional Medical Hospital

- *Around 15 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Additional requirements for data reporting too burdensome on small hospitals.
- Pay more to primary care providers and rural doctors; pay for prevention. Use pharmacists to practice disease management with their patients.
- Medical bills unaffordable, which means more uncompensated care.
- Concerned with access to mental health services.
- Use carrots and sticks to promote wellness (e.g., tax tobacco, lower premiums for healthy behaviors). Start prevention with children; strengthen system by more outreach and prevention programs.

Vision 20/20 (Winfield)

- *Around 20 attendees representing this Cowley County development organization*
- Lack of physical and nutritional education in schools. Target youth for prevention efforts.
- Redesign system so that it pays for prevention rather than sickness. Reward healthy behaviors (e.g., worksite wellness programs).
- Health insurance too expensive, especially for rural Kansans; these costs prevent timely access.
- Group insurance requirements too strict in Kansas and prevents businesses from entering the market.
- Lower health care costs by capping medical malpractice lawsuits and standardizing paperwork.
- Rural areas do not have a lot of competition; free market seems to be failing them. Don't support socialized medicine. Support for banning pharmaceutical advertisements.

William Newton Memorial Hospital (Winfield)

- *Around 10 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Want less government involvement in health care.
- Redirect money to pay for health (prevention and wellness) instead of health care. Offer incentives for healthy behaviors; target children.
- Promote personal responsibility.
- Pay more to primary care doctors; currently there is more incentive to go into a specialty field. Improve Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements to doctors. Get rid of specialty hospitals.
- Everyone should pay into the system, but it needs to account for ability to pay.

El Dorado Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 5 attendees representing businesses*
- Increase pool sizes by allowing small businesses to group together.

- Target children and young adults for prevention education.
 - Current safety-net system is an incentive to be uninsured; underinsured patients pay into the system, but avoid care due to high out-of-pocket costs whereas uninsured receive free care.
 - Everyone should contribute to the system; mandate health insurance or implement a sales tax.
 - Do NOT want socialized medicine; partnership between public and private insurance.
 - Individuals with preexisting conditions are unable to find affordable health insurance.
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Day 4: Ft. Scott/Pittsburg/Parsons Tour

August 2, 2007

Ft. Scott Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 30 attendees representing businesses*
- Reduce costs by standardizing paperwork and more transparency to drive competition.
- Mandate individual insurance to get the young and healthy into pools to help subsidize the sicker patients. Mandate all children have coverage; mandate employers to provide coverage, but keep in mind small businesses and their ability to pay.
- Promote prevention; insurers should cover these services, schools should implement nutrition and physical activity programs; educate parents to reinforce healthy behaviors.
- Tax tobacco; may support a sales tax to fund coverage for the uninsured.

Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas (Pittsburg)

- *Around 20 attendees representing consumers*
- Small businesses, low-wage workers, and college-age youth unable to find affordable coverage. Offer subsidies to these populations.
- Increase provider reimbursements for Medicaid and Medicare. Lack of access due to limited facilities and providers.
- Do not support individual mandates.
- Tax tobacco, but not sales. Tax unhealthy foods, but don't tax healthy foods as incentives for individuals to eat healthier.
- Reduce costs for medications.
- Focus prevention efforts on schools; get rid of vending machines, provide healthier lunches, reinstate physical education classes.
- Cap medical malpractice suits.

Labette County Medical Center (Parsons)

- *Around 20 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Health care is unaffordable; family coverage too expensive.
- Increase funding for mental health; focus on rehabilitation for drug abuse rather than incarceration.
- Use carrots & sticks to promote healthy living; tax tobacco, implement worksite wellness programs. Promote personal responsibility.
- State should create a pool.
- No employer mandates, especially for small businesses. No individual mandates.
- State needs to take advantage of federal dollars and maintain more state money instead of it going to the federal government.
- Control medical lawsuits in order to control costs.

Parsons Chamber of Commerce

- *About 5 attendees representing businesses*
- Concerned with rising health care costs for premiums, deductibles, and pharmacy.
- Lack of access to dental care for Medicaid/Medicare beneficiaries.
- More personal responsibility for health behaviors; reward people for healthy living instead of penalizing them for bad behaviors. Promote worksite clinics; target children and schools.
- No individual mandates due to high rates of poverty in Parsons.
- Give tax credits to businesses for health coverage and wellness programs.
- Tax tobacco.

Day 5: Goodland/Norton/Hays Tour

August 3, 2007

Goodland Chamber of Commerce

- *About 6 attendees representing businesses*
- Shortage of specialty, dental, and mental health providers (improve reimbursements); telemedicine critical.
- Do not support socialized system; prefer more competition as a mechanism for improving quality of care.
- Allow small businesses to enter into the state's health insurance pool.
- Employer premiums too expensive; prefer to drop employer-sponsored care and increase wages.
- Use prevention for mental health care.

Norton County Hospital

- *About 15 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Need incentives to recruit doctors into rural areas before people can have medical homes.
- Better reimbursement for Medicare and Medicaid.
- Concerns with LabOne and DSH.
- Educate elderly about health insurance; educate and advertise on prevention efforts.
- Concerns about government involvement in health care; usually leads to job loss in rural Kansas.

Norton Christian Church

- *About 20 attendees from this congregation*
- Concerns about government involvement in health care.
- Concerns about effects of taxing tobacco.
- Focus prevention efforts on children; insurance policies should cover preventive services.
- Family coverage too expensive.
- Believe HSAs and tort reform might lower health care costs.

Kansas Farm Bureau – Ellis County Members (Hays)

- *About 12 attendees representing farmers*
- Access to care and cost of insurance is a priority for the Farm Bureau; current system is NOT working for Kansas farmers. Health care is unaffordable, few employees offering coverage, and limited choice in providers.
- Rural communities need to have options for creating large pools for group coverage.
- Support more competition by creating incentives.
- Support prevention efforts; create wellness programs, disease management, and educate children on prevention.

- Base assistance eligibility on net income rather than gross income.
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Day 6: Emporia/Topeka Tour

August 23, 2007

Newman Regional Health (Emporia)

- *Around 15 attendees representing health care providers and administrators.*
- Support for consumer directed health care, price transparency, and tax credits.
- Need to level the playing field; help small businesses.
- Support for personal responsibility and accountability in financing health care.
- Recognize the need to reform payment schedules in order to align them with keeping patients healthy and treating them in an efficient manner; need to control costs.
- Support for paying for prevention and for penalizing unhealthy behaviors (e.g., smokers pay higher premiums).
- Need to reduce and standardize paperwork; currently it is too burdensome and inefficient.

Emporia Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 5 attendees representing businesses.*
- Mixed feelings towards incremental versus comprehensive health reforms.
- Mixed feelings about standardization and flexibility within health policies, paperwork, and the delivery of care; support for less government regulations.
- Need for more affordable and portable health insurance plans that promote competition.
- Recognize many barriers to prevention efforts. Do not support mandates for prevention due to cost.
- Employers need help in educating their employees about prevention and small businesses need help in providing health coverage to employees.
- Support consumer-directed health (e.g., health savings accounts, price transparency, and flexible spending accounts).
- Need more affordable health insurance; support for personal responsibility for financing health care, but not through mandates.

Flint Hills Community Health Clinic (Emporia)

- *Around 40 attendees representing consumers.*
- Many concerns regarding rural community access to doctors, dentists, and specialized care, especially for uninsured and Medicaid patients.
- Access to affordable insurance coverage is a problem for small businesses and college-aged students who have aged out of their parents' insurance coverage.
- Support for personal responsibility in financing health care and healthy behaviors; use penalties (e.g., tobacco and junk food taxes) and incentives (e.g., pay doctors to counsel on nutrition; lowered premiums for healthy lifestyles).
- Target schools in delivering messages on healthy behaviors.
- Concerns regarding the growing pharmaceutical industry and the negative influence it has on consumers; promote more use of generic drugs.

Mennonite Community (Emporia)

- *Around 5 attendees representing Mennonite community members and leaders.*
- Difficulty in accessing health care due to rural location and affordability; increasing number of uninsured in the congregation.
- Recognize system is fragmented; support for consumer-directed health care (e.g., price transparency and consumer education).
- Support promoting personal responsibility in terms of healthy behaviors, using services appropriately, and financing health care.
- Support providing incentives to providers in order to improve quality of care delivered.
- Churches are small businesses and need help providing health care assistance (coverage and education) to vulnerable populations.

Hosted by Insurance Commissioner, Sandy Praeger (Topeka)

- *Around 15 attendees representing the insurance industry.*
 - Support for consumer-directed health care (e.g., education and price transparency).
 - Support for promoting personal responsibility in financing health care, healthy behaviors, and appropriate use of services.
 - Need for simplification in the system (e.g., administrative and consumer understanding).
 - Support for using incentives to encourage the purchase of health insurance (e.g., health savings account tax credits) and promoting healthy behaviors (e.g., policies that cover preventive services).
 - Support use of electronic health records to improve quality and efficiency and to reduce duplications.
 - State needs to address problems with small businesses purchasing health insurance.
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Day 7: Hutchinson/Dodge City/Garden City Tour

August 24, 2007

United Methodist Health Ministry Fund (Hutchinson)

- *Around 30 attendees representing consumers.*
- Support for consumer directed health care (e.g., consumer education, health information technology)
- Middle class, small businesses and young people need help in accessing affordable health insurance.
- Need for simplification of health system; current system lacks coordination and is too complicated.
- Mixed feelings about competition and regulations of health care and health insurance.
- Support for using incentives in prevention efforts; target children and schools, and provide more medical education to providers about health and wellness.
- Current system makes access of certain services difficult (e.g., mental and dental health care).

Reno County Farm Bureau (Hutchinson)

- *Around 7 attendees representing farmers and consumers.*
- Mixed feelings in regards to government regulation and government-run health care; like Medicare program, but afraid of tax increases associated with government programs.
- Farming industry is a small business and needs assistance in providing employees health insurance.
- Support for consumer-directed health care (e.g., price transparency, consumer education, and tax credits).
- Need more education on where to receive free or reduced health care services.
- Support for prevention; health insurance policies should cover preventive services.

Dodge City Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 7 attendees representing businesses.*
- Support for prevention efforts (e.g., smoke free environments, pay for screenings to catch cancer early); target youth. Support using penalties to promote healthy living (e.g., smokers pay higher health care premiums).
- Do not support a single-payer system; support less regulation in order to promote competition.
- Need more providers to meet health care needs of Kansas; provide more money for student scholarships in the health care field.
- Need for more portability in health insurance.
- Need higher reimbursement for government programs to reduce cost-shifting on to privately insured patients.

United Methodist Western Kansas Mexican-American Ministries (Garden City)

- *Around 15 attendees representing consumers and providers.*
- Need for more standardization and simplification of the health care system.
- Support for paying for prevention (e.g., pay providers for nutritional counseling) and targeting schools, parents, and employers to promote prevention. Support for using incentives to promote healthy behaviors (e.g., lower premiums).
- Access to providers and services a major concern for rural communities.
- Support for paying for a primary care medical home to better coordinate care; support electronic medical records, but not as a replacement for medical homes.
- Support for promoting personal responsibility for financing health care and using services appropriately.

Day 8: Topeka/Manhattan/Salina Tour

August 28, 2007

Kansas Association of Insurance Agents (Topeka)

- *Around 20 attendees representing insurance agents.*
- Support use of health information technology (e.g., price transparency and health records) and consumer-directed health care.
- Need more consumer education on where to access services that meet financial and health care needs.
- Do not support most tax increases, premium increases, or a connector. However, general support for increased tobacco taxes to help subsidize costs of the uninsured.
- Support increased competition in order to improve quality of health plans; reduce regulations in order to foster competition.
- Support personal responsibility for paying for health care, but realize its barriers. Need to educate the young on how to finance their health care costs.
- Support for paying for prevention via health/risk assessment programs.

Kansas Farm Bureau (Manhattan)

- *Around 10 attendees representing farmers and Farm Bureau staff.*
- Farmers need help in accessing and providing coverage for employees.
- Do not support individual mandates, increased governmental regulations, or increased cost (e.g., taxes, higher premiums).
- Support promoting personal responsibility in financing health care.

- Need for simplification of system and of paperwork; need to reduce bureaucracy.
- Need more providers in order to meet Kansas health care needs; focus on getting students into health care fields.
- Lack of access to services and affordability of health care are major concerns.

Flint Hills Community Clinic (Manhattan)

- *Around 15 attendees representing safety-net providers and administrators.*
- Small businesses need help in providing health insurance coverage.
- Support use of education (e.g., health fairs), incentives, and penalties (e.g., junk food tax) for prevention efforts and to promote appropriate use of services.
- Support for medical homes; need to pay for primary care visits.
- Access issues due to lack of providers and affordable insurance needs to be addressed. Need to keep costs down in order to increase access to health care.
- Current payment system encourages doctors to provide more care instead of better quality and efficient care.

Salina Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 15 attendees businesses, providers, and health care administrators.*
 - Need standardization in paperwork and reimbursements to save time and money.
 - Recognize that prevention efforts require generational/cultural changes and are long-term; support for using incentives to encourage healthy behaviors.
 - Need to level the playing fields to enable different business sectors (e.g., small businesses and farmers) to purchase health insurance for their employees and to offer worksite wellness programs.
 - Believe health savings accounts and tax credits might encourage young healthy populations into purchasing health insurance.
 - Do not support individual or employer mandates; prefer use of incentives and disincentives to get employers and individuals to purchase health insurance.
 - Recognize the need for competition in the system and do not want to drive health insurers out of Kansas.
-