

# LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE FOR **GUARANTEED HEALTH CARE**

Dear Representative,

In the last two decades over a dozen state health reforms have attempted to provide universal health care coverage. Yet our healthcare system is still desperately in need of your help. It's clear new engineering will be needed in the months ahead as the nation looks to rebuild our economy and our healthcare system. To help with this task, the Leadership Conference for Guaranteed Health Care will host a forum, "**National Lessons from State Health Reform: The Massachusetts Case Study**", and consider the nation's most recent state health care overhaul.

What can we learn from Massachusetts and is it a model for national health policy? The 'Massachusetts model' includes many of the policy features currently being considered in national health care reform, including individual mandates, subsidized private insurance for low-income individuals, employer "play or pay" provisions, and the creation of an insurance exchange designed to promote competition and encourage insurers to offer adequate and affordable coverage. We feel it is especially important to consider the lessons of the 'Massachusetts model' before incorporating any of these features into a national health care reform bill.

In order to provide a multifaceted view of the Massachusetts reform, the forum will be run like a congressional hearing. We invite you to join the 'Committee' of Representatives who will listen to witness testimony and ask questions of the expert panel. Congressman Eric Massa [NY-29] will Chair the forum. Rep Massa's district is similar to many nationwide that are suffering as out of control healthcare costs consume state and municipal budgets and district residents struggle to get the health care they need. We invite you learn from Massachusetts' recent state reform on behalf of those in your district who need national reform most.

The forum will be held on **February 25, 2009, 2pm – 4pm, 2226 Rayburn House Office Building**. The program will consist of two expert panels, one beginning at 2:00pm the other at 3:00pm; each will be followed by questions from the Committee. The panel of experts will represent health centers, insurance brokers, physicians, nurses, patients, and labor leaders. They include David Himmelstein, MD, Cambridge Hospital Physician, Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School; Sandy Eaton, RN, Massachusetts Nurses Association; Jamie Eldridge, Massachusetts State Senator; Arthur MacEwan, PhD, Professor of Economics, University of Massachusetts Boston; Robert Gaw, President, National Association of Socially Responsible Organizations, Health Benefits Administrator.

We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past--too much is at stake. We look forward to adding your name to the Committee to listen to witness testimony at the February 25 forum, and we invite your questions.

The Leadership Conference for Guaranteed Health Care is a coalition of doctors, nurses and other health care providers; labor unions; nonprofit agencies; reform advocates and faith-based organizations working to achieve guaranteed comprehensive, high quality, and affordable health care coverage for everyone. The coalition specifically advocates for a publicly funded and privately delivered national health care system structured around a single-payer financing mechanism.

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