



OBAMA-BIDEN TRANSITION PROJECT

HEALTH CARE COMMUNITY DISCUSSION: HOST AND MODERATOR GUIDE

I. OVERVIEW AND GOALS

Thank you for volunteering to host and/or moderate a Health Care Community Discussion.

At your Health Care Community Discussion, you will:

1. Engage in discussions with your friends and neighbors about health care reform and draft a group submission with your findings and conclusions. This will help the Transition Health Policy Team flesh out key issues around health care and give the Team fresh ideas about the best ways to promote the President-elect and Vice President-elect's vision of quality, affordable health care for all Americans.
2. Develop your group submission to the Transition Health Policy Team through a process that respects, empowers, and engages all attendees.
3. Identify particularly poignant stories about health care from participants that can be used to help emphasize the need for health care reform in our country.

II. YOUR ROLE

Your role is: 1) to organize the meeting; and 2) to help moderate the meeting (or find someone to serve that role). These discussions should last an hour to an hour and a half. If you are serving as the moderator, you should not strongly advocate for specific health policy positions. Instead, your role is to listen, facilitate discussion that elicits the views of all attendees, and help the participants draft a submission to the Transition Health Policy Team. In addition, please identify the most compelling personal stories that illustrate the need for health care reform in our country.

A. Before the Health Care Community Discussion:

Step 1: Invite Friends, Family, Neighbors, and Colleagues:

- **Invitations:** Invite friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors to your Health Care Community Discussion. You could also create event flyers and post them at your local coffee shop, grocery store, or library. You should aim to invite at least 15-20 people to your event, although smaller gatherings are of course fine as well.
- **RSVPs:** Encourage all of your attendees to RSVP for your event so you know how many people to expect. Remind attendees of the date and time of your Health Care Community Discussion right before the event.

Step 2: Get your Materials in Order:

- **Meeting Agenda:** Create a meeting agenda to help your Health Care Community Discussion run smoothly, and print out copies for attendees. This Guide contains a sample agenda:
 1. Welcome and Introductions of Attendees
 2. Explanation of Goals of the Health Care Community Discussion (*Listed Above*)

3. Explanation of Procedures for Meeting (*i.e. Ground Rules to Ensure Orderly Discussion*)
 4. Discussion Questions
 5. Participant Survey
 6. Drafting of Group Submission for Transition Health Policy Team
 7. Group Photo or Video (If Possible)
 8. Wrap Up and Thank You
- Participant Guide: Print out copies of the Health Care Community Discussion Participant Guide for all attendees.
 - Paper and Pens: Make sure to have pens and paper available for attendees to take notes.
 - Documentation of the Event: Have your camera on hand so you can take photos and share them with the Transition Health Policy Team after the event.

B. During the Health Care Community Discussion:

- **Introduction of Attendees:** The host should welcome everyone to the Health Care Community Discussion, introduce him/herself, and lead introductions. The host could encourage everyone to *briefly* say why they are attending the discussion.
- **Description of Event:** The host should give a short description of the purpose of the Health Care Community Discussions, such as:

“The Presidential Transition Health Policy Team is encouraging Americans to host and attend Health Care Community Discussions across the country between December 15 and December 31. These Community Discussions are part of the President-elect’s continuing efforts to reach out and directly involve the American people in their own government. Health care is a top priority for President-elect Obama, and he wants your help in designing a system that provides quality, affordable health care for all Americans. His nominee to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Daschle, is attending several Health Care Community Discussions. He and his Team will review the submissions from all of these gatherings. President-elect Obama wants to bring the voices and health care concerns of all Americans to Washington. On his behalf, thank you for helping to make this happen by participating in this Discussion.”
- **Explanation of Goals of the Health Care Community Discussion:** The host should go over the three goals of the Health Care Community Discussion mentioned above, i.e. 1) To discuss health care reform and draft a submission to the Transition Health Policy Team; 2) To use a process to do this that respects and empowers attendees; and 3) To identify stories that exemplify the need for health care reform. Please stress that everyone should conduct the meeting like President-elect Obama would: respecting everyone, listening to everyone’s opinion, and engaging in spirited discussion without being disagreeable.
- **Explanation of Moderator’s Role:** At this point, the moderator (if someone other than the host) should start leading the discussion. The moderator should explain his/her role: the moderator will listen, facilitate discussion, and answer any questions on the process. The moderator is not there to tell the attendees what to do or offer suggestions.
- **Explanation of Submission to the Transition Health Policy Team:** A key goal of the discussion is the drafting of a group submission on health care reform to the Transition

Health Policy Team. This Guide contains a suggested template for the group submission. The moderator should read through this template before the discussion starts.

Process for a Small Group (up to 20-25 participants):

- Preparation for Discussion:
 - Pass out the Health Care Community Discussion Participant Guide. Attendees should take 5-10 minutes reading the document. The group should then select a note taker.
 - The group should decide whether they want to address all discussion questions or instead focus on a particular area.
 - The group should decide how much time to spend for each topic in the Participant Guide. If the group is discussing all the questions, it should spend 5 to 10 minutes per question.
- Discussion: Use the discussion questions in the Participant Guide to guide the conversation, and make sure the group follows the agreed timing. Try to make sure that each attendee has a chance to give input and contribute to what will eventually be submitted online to the Transition Health Policy Team. Help the group get past any obstacles.
- Draft the Submission to the Transition Health Policy Team: The group can have the note taker draft its submission to the Transition Health Policy Team as it goes along or at the end of the discussion. Encourage brevity and plain language.
- Fill Out Participant Surveys: Pass out the Participant Survey (at the end the Participant Guide) and collect completed surveys from everyone.
- Listen for Compelling Stories: Identify participants with stories that would be good features to highlight the need for health care reform. (The host/moderator should submit names, contact information, and a summary of stories with the group submission.)
- Closing: Thank everyone for their participation. Thank them for everything they are doing to help achieve President-elect Obama's goal to provide quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

Process for a Large Meeting (more than 25 participants): For a larger meeting, the group could divide into smaller groups of no more than 15-20 persons. If there is only one moderator at a large meeting, the moderator should make sure that each smaller group selects a facilitator in addition to a note taker. The lead moderator can rotate among the groups, providing help to each group where appropriate.

How to Be a Successful Moderator: The key to being a successful moderator is to remember and employ these key principles: Respect, Empower, and Include.

- Respect: Every attendee should be treated with respect; no one should feel that their views were ignored or dismissed without being heard. Vigorous debate is encouraged, and attendees can disagree without being disagreeable.
- Empower: Whenever possible, entrust attendees with responsibility over the meeting's procedure and its substantive contribution. These meetings are not occasions for "experts" to listen to "everyday people" and then decide what is best. They are an opportunity for attendees to come together to diagnose the health care problems facing their community and propose solutions.

- **Include:** Strive to incorporate everyone’s concerns and opinions in the discussion and submission. Each attendee’s views matter – whatever their background, beliefs, or previous political involvement. Even when there is disagreement, strive to find common ground.

C. After the Health Care Community Discussion:

- Submit the group’s Health Care Community Discussion submission online;
- Compile results from the Participant Survey and submit results online;
- Submit your photographs and videos online.

III. WHAT TO DO IF . . .

- **Press shows up:**
 - Unless we contact a host directly, the Transition Health Policy Team is not directing press to any Health Care Community Discussions. In some cases, press may show up on their own initiative. And, of course, it is possible that one or more attendees will blog about their experience. Therefore, you should assume that the event is being recorded—and speak accordingly.
 - If a reporter shows up, is given access to your meeting, and approaches you, you may tell them about your role in facilitating a discussion among the citizens attending the event. You should also urge the reporter to talk to the attendees about why they came and what their hopes for the meeting are.
 - Do not feel obligated to be interviewed in the first place and feel free to stop the interview at any time. Do not hesitate to decline to comment on something you are unfamiliar with.
 - Tell us about your press interactions. Please email Jenny Backus at Jennifer.Backus@Ptt.gov and let her know which outlets and reporters covered your meeting and who they interviewed.
- **There appears to be an intractable disagreement:**
 - Make sure the discussion stays respectful; we can disagree without being disagreeable.
 - Try taking the discussion to a higher, more abstract level – if we cannot agree about the specific policy approach to an issue, maybe we can agree on the principles that should guide our approach to the issue. If we cannot agree on that, at least we can agree the issue is important and deserves the attention of the Transition Health Policy Team.
 - If a consensus cannot be reached, you could include different viewpoints in your submission to the Transition Health Policy Team.
- **The discussion gets heated or out of hand:**
 - Don’t be afraid to call a short break or skip a question. At an appropriate time, affirm how good it is that the attendees are so passionate about health care reform. Also, stress how important it is to be respectful and highlight President-elect Obama’s ability to listen to people with viewpoints different from his own.
- **Someone is intentionally disrupting the conversation, participating in bad faith, or being persistently difficult:**
 - Talk to them in a break by taking them aside and gently explaining the purpose of the meeting. Ask them to be respectful to others or leave.

Thank you so much for your help!

Health Care Community Discussion: Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions of Attendees
2. Goals of the Health Care Community Discussion
3. Procedures for the Meeting
4. Discussion Questions
5. Participant Survey
6. Drafting of Group Submission for Transition Health Policy Team
7. Group Photo or Video (If Possible)
8. Wrap Up and Thank You

Suggested Health Care Community Discussion Group Submission

General Questions:

- How many people attended your health care community discussion?
- Please summarize compelling personal stories from attendees about the need for health care reform in our country and provide their contact information.

Summary of Responses from Discussion Questions:

- What does the group perceive as the biggest problem in the health system?
- How do attendees choose a doctor or hospital? Where do attendees get information in making that decision? How should public policy promote quality health care providers?
- Have attendees or their family members experienced difficulty paying medical bills? How can policy makers address this problem?
- In addition to employer-based coverage, would the group like the option to purchase a private plan through an insurance-exchange or a public plan like Medicare?
- Did attendees know how much they or their employer pays for health insurance? What should employer's role be in a reformed health care system?
- Were attendees familiar with the types of preventive services Americans should receive? Had attendees gotten the recommended prevention? If not, how can public policy help?
- How can public policy promote healthier lifestyles?