

**Adequate Health Care Task Force
Meeting Summary
Wednesday, March 29, 2006
10:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Illinois Public Act 93-0973, formerly House Bill 2268, creates the Health Care Justice Act and encourages the State of Illinois to implement a health care plan that provides access to a full range of preventive, acute, and long-term health care services; maintains and improves the quality of health care services offered to Illinois residents, and meets other criteria. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is required, subject to an appropriation or availability of other funds, to enter into a contract with an “independent research entity” experienced in assessing health care reforms, financing, and care delivery models. The provisions of this legislation establish an “Adequate Health Care Task Force” with 29 voting members: five to be appointed by the Governor, and six appointments made by each of the four leaders of the General assembly (the Speaker of the House and the House Minority Leader, and the President of the Senate and the Senate Minority Leader). The Directors of the Departments of Public Health, Public Aid, Aging, and Insurance, along with the Secretary of the Department of Human Services, are to be invited to meetings of the “Adequate Health Care Task Force,” but are not included in the Task Force’s membership. The Department of Public Health is required to be “the primary agency in providing administrative support” to the Task Force.

This legislation provides for public hearings in each Illinois Congressional District, and a website detailing the work of the Task Force, accessible through the Governor’s internet home page, is to be established and maintained. Printed copies of Task Force information are to be made available for persons who lack access to the Internet website. A Task Force report, detailing recommendations for a health care access plan as specified within the legislation, is to be submitted to the General Assembly by March 15, 2006. The bill encourages the General Assembly to consider legislation enacting the Task Force recommendations by December 31, 2006. The Act took effect July 1, 2004.

Task Force Members in Attendance: Dr. Craig Backs; Kenneth Boyd; Catherine Bresler; Timothy Carrigan; Rep. Elizabeth Coulson; Jan Daker; Margaret Davis; J Terry Dooling; Jim Duffet; Sen. Iris Martinez; Pamela Mitroff; James Moore; Joseph Orthofer; Joe Roberts; Kenneth Robbins; Ruth Rothstein; Gregory Smith; Ken Smithmier; Dr. Quentin Young

Regrets (Task Force Members): Mike Murphy; Tracey Printe;, Sen. Donne E Trotter

State Agency Representatives: Ralph Schubert, Department of Human Services

Illinois Department of Public Health Staff: David Carvalho; Randy Hall; Mike Jones; Ashley Walter

Guests: Elena Butkus; Teresa Hursey; Dr. Bob Hamilton; Patrick Gallagher; Brent Adams, Gwyn Davidson

- The meeting was called to order at 10:40 am by Dr. Wayne Lerner, Chair. Task Force members, IDPH staff and guests then introduced themselves.
- The Task Force discussed the four public hearings that had taken place since the last Task Force meeting. The four hearings took place in Springfield (additional hearing) and in the 12th (Carbondale), 17th (Rock Island) and 16th (Rockford) Congressional Districts.
- Following are themes Task Force members synthesized from testimony given at the public hearings:

- The uninsured status affects all levels of society.
- People providing testimony would like assurance from the Task Force members that they were being heard, an acknowledgement of their testimony.
- Safety net providers, particularly in rural areas, are experiencing difficulty receiving enough funding to remain open.
- People with chronic health problems experience difficulty obtaining health insurance regardless of their ability to pay the premium. Many are uninsurable.
- The impact on geography to access to care.
- The need to ensure access to proper training and equipment and coordination of services for volunteer EMS providers.
- Impact of current reimbursement levels for Medicaid and Medicare on access to care.
- Access to care is an issue for minority groups and communities with cultural and language barriers.
- Need for access to mental health services.
- Elena Butkus, Vice President, Finance and Teresa Hursey, Vice President, Finance, of the Illinois Hospital Association presented to the Task Force regarding the role of hospitals in the provision of care and the impact of the uninsured.
- Brent Adams, Policy Director, for Citizen Action presented to the Task Force regarding the "Healthy Illinois" proposal. Sen Debbie Halvorson joined by telephone.
- Peter Gallagher of the Illinois State Medical Society presented to the Task Force regarding concerns of the physician community with respect to the provision of care to the uninsured and views various proposals under consideration.
- Dr. Robert Hamilton of the Illinois State Medical Society presented to the Task Force regarding Health Savings Accounts.
- David Carvalho announced IDPH had awarded the contract for the research entity RFP to Navigant Consulting, teamed with Mathematica and Milliman. The project manager, Gwyn Davidson, was introduced.
- David Carvalho announced Ashley Walter would be leaving IDPH in two weeks to pursue another career opportunity.
- Task Force members were reminded there was a special Task Force meeting on Friday, April 21 at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois to hear from private sector analysts regarding private sector alternatives.
- Task Force discussed upcoming presentations and presentations for policy proposals. The Steering Committee was going to discuss presentation strategies during their meeting.
- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:45 pm.