



Illinois Psychiatric Society

NEWS RELEASE

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Congressman Danny K. Davis holds Town Hall meetings on Healthcare Reform

Chicago, Illinois – Congressman Danny K. Davis (IL-7) held the first of several Town Hall meetings to discuss reforming our nation’s healthcare system with his constituents. The meeting was held on May 11, 2009 at Northwestern Memorial Hospital on campus of Feinberg School of Medicine. Congressman Davis is in unique position to provide leadership on health care reform. His district includes 4 medical schools and 21 hospitals as well as the American Medical Association, American Osteopathic Association, Chicago Medical Society, and Illinois Psychiatric Society and numerous other healthcare associations.

Each of the panelists brought a distinct perspective to the panel which included Dr. Sidney Weissman, Professor of Psychiatry at Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, Dr. William Werner, President Elect of the Chicago Medical Society and Vice President for Clinical Transformation at Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Dr. Quentin Young, Founder and Chair of the Board of Directors for Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Elena Butkus, Vice President of Government Relations for the Illinois Hospital Association, and Mr. J. Michael Patton, Executive Director of the Illinois Pharmacists Association.

According to Ms. Butkus, the current healthcare system is a “sick care” focusing on treatment and diagnosis. The new system must be a wellness and quality care healthcare system. Mr. Patton highlighted the need for elimination of unnecessary costs, such as Pharmacy Benefit Management programs, currently included in the system. The system must focus on what is best for patients. Dr. Weissman said that a new system must not only ensure that availability of healthcare services but also that quality services are available to everyone. People must be educated and engaged on how to use the new system. A new system is not sufficient if it only insures the uninsured. More physicians should be trained in primary care. Dr. Werner recommended that the new system must work on methods to better handle the burden of chronic diseases as that is the area that consumes the most healthcare resources. Dr. Werner emphasized the need to work on people’s lifestyle choices including smoking, lack of exercise and obesity. Dr. Young emphatically supported the need to implement a single payor system using Medicare as the model and that the new healthcare system cannot be based on profit. Healthcare institutions cannot be investment opportunities as

the cost of profits must be passed on to patients. Under Dr. Young's proposal, fees would be charged to patients based on a sliding scale model.

The people were heard from. Most want change now. In concluding the meeting, Congressman Davis said, "healthcare is a right in our country and not a privilege." A second town hall meeting will be held at Loretto Hospital on May 28, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.