

## National Healthcare Summit kicks off in Miami

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By [Claire Wolford](#) // Contributing News Writer



JESSICA HODDER // HURRICANE STAFF

With myriad problems facing the United States, none is more pressing or elicits so many differing responses as the broken healthcare system.

In an effort to establish a reform strategy, 11 American leaders from fields such as business, government, labor and healthcare met with each other on Jan. 28 in the BankUnited Center to kick off the first in a series of Summit Conversations covering national healthcare. UM President Donna E. Shalala, former Secretary of Health and Human Services, introduced the discussion as well as participated in it along with former Rep. Dick Gephardt. PhRMA CEO and President Billy Tauzin and Scotts Miracle-Gro CEO Jim Hagedorn among others.

The theme of the evening was the search for consensus among individuals from different fields, some even former adversaries. The topics discussed were far-reaching, from the issues at hand to the answers ahead. It kicked off with President Shalala saying that the state of American healthcare was “fragmented, fragmented, fragmented.”

Brought up a number of times was the fact that America’s system is a “sick-care system,” only treating patients once they are ill and doing precious little to prevent disease. Prevention was a hot topic; nearly everyone agreed more was needed but there was little consensus as to whose responsibility that was, be it personal, employer or mandated by the government.

Also discussed was how healthcare might be prioritized during a recession. However, Tauzin said, “Healthcare is the economy. Thirty percent of the economy is health-related.”

Other topics covered the future of health technologies as well as high-risk patients avoided by insurance companies. While a number of good points were made, there seemed to be few conclusions drawn as to where to go from here.

“It was more about what healthcare shouldn’t be, not what it should be,” senior Chris Torres said. “The roundtable set up was effective and it was a good starting point.”

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