



Health-care summit held in Madison

By: [Jessica Feld](#) /The Daily Cardinal - April 8, 2009

Lawmakers and business representatives offered bipartisan solutions to the nation's healthcare crisis Tuesday at a healthcare summit hosted by former Wis. Gov. Tommy Thompson and the UW Law School.

National congressional and business leaders gathered at the Edgewater Hotel in Madison Tuesday to discuss health-care reform.

Hosted by the UW Law School and former Wis. Gov. Tommy Thompson and coordinated by America's Agenda, a collaboration of non-profit organizations, the summit addressed approaches to correct the nation's current health-care crisis.

"Health care is too expensive, it is not accessible enough and it certainly doesn't cover the uninsured the way we should," Thompson said.

Summit participants included CEOs of small and large businesses, medical representatives, a pharmaceutical representative, a union leader and prominent lawmakers. Each of the 12 guests represented various sectors with a vested interest in developing health care reform.

"This really is an economic issue as much as it is a human and a moral issue," John Arensmeyer, CEO of Small Business Majority, said. "The time is now to do something, to bring everyone together ... to talk about this because it's the only way we're going to get solutions to the problem."

Topics addressed included factors leading to the rise in health-care costs, disease prevention as opposed to treatment, creating incentives for businesses and health-care providers to reduce spending and insuring the over 50 million uninsured and under-insured Americans.

Historically, partisan politics have prevented successful health-care reform, Thompson said. According to Thompson, by focusing on suggested reforms like preventative medicine and health information technology systems, which both parties support, health care could see immediate improvement.

"My goal is that we'll get the stuff we really agree on out there and pretty much done and then bring the hard stuff behind it," said former U.S. House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Miss. "Once you start people working together sometimes it's even easier to work on stuff you disagree [about]."

Throughout the summit, participants expressed a general sense of urgency—a desire to transform health care sooner than later.

“This really is the problem of the day,” U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis. said. “We need health care for a sick family member, for businesses trying to survive, for drug companies being affected globally. This is where it’s at and that’s why you have so many desperate voices at the same place listening to each other,” Kind said.

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