



Communities Connect

Better Health for More People at Less Cost

Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Costs and Access

Guiding Principles for Moving Forward: Recommendations from a Community Partnership Perspective Part #1 in a Series of BRC Briefing Papers

Introduction

Community Connects (CC) was actively engaged in the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) fact finding and recommendation process. CC made two separate presentations before the Commission, provided input and feedback at key junctures along the way and submitted a formal proposal as part of the BRC Request for Proposals

Communities Connect supports the goals, strategies and recommendations of the BRC. The following are guiding principles that CC hopes policy makers will adopt when evaluating programs and legislation being proposed as part of the implementation the BRC recommendations. *Guiding principles* represents the first in a series of briefing papers that will address in more detail specific BRC recommendations as well as offer analysis on implementing legislation as it is introduced.

Principle #1: “Coverage and Care for All”

Increasing the percentage of people with coverage needs to be done in a way that ensures access to care to those who have insurance.

- ***Insurance coverage does not necessarily translate into access to care.*** If commercial coverage options are too rich they may not be affordable. If public insurance benefit plans are under funded (and providers compensated at a rate too far from market) than access to providers who actually provide the care is jeopardized.

Principle #2: Communities are vital partners in achieving the BRC’s goal of statewide access to coverage and care.

- ***Programs that are producing successful outcomes on a smaller scale are now in place in many CC communities.*** These existing initiatives offer valuable “lessons learned” and can serve as models for implementing many of the BRC’s recommendations.
- ***Include representatives from community healthcare collaboratives as members of the boards and commissions being proposed.*** They have a broad understanding of the healthcare system that delivers services and produces results at the community level and can offer valuable input into the design of statewide initiatives.

Principle #3: Public access to healthcare coverage and access services should be “user friendly”, simple and understandable.

Our healthcare system is a patchwork of financing sources and public and private programs that are fragmented and complicated. But the complexity of the system doesn't need to be the face of the system.

- ***Consumers should use a central point of access for health care coverage eligibility and care issues at both a local and state level*** that is responsible for determining eligibility for the variety of plans and programs and assists the consumer in the enrollment process if necessary.

Principle #4: Build on what is in place and working now

Many programs now operating at the state and local level can serve as a foundation or an effective component of the new services and programs being proposed as part of the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations. Examples include:

- School outreach programs connecting children not enrolled in private or state health insurance plans to coverage and care
- The Office of the Insurance Commissioner's SHIBA program serves as a vehicle for making the insurance market more accessible and understandable to consumers. SHIBA is a model program in place in most counties throughout the state that uses well trained volunteers to assist consumers sort through confusing insurance options.

Contact Information: