

MEMORANDUM

TO: Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care Reform

FROM: Steve ErkenBrack and Elisabeth Arenales

RE: Statutorily Required Hearings and Public Input

DATE: July 16, 2007

1. October Congressional District Hearings

The Communications & Outreach Committee was asked to make firm recommendations to the full Commission regarding the Congressional District Hearings at the Commission meeting on July 18th. The agenda for the 18th is very tightly scheduled, and we have only 15 minutes for this discussion. Accordingly, the Committee met twice last week and spent hours debating numerous sites.

The following locations are unanimously recommended for consideration by the Commission.

METRO AREA: Denver Central (CD 1)
Parker (CD 6)
Brighton (CD 7)

FRONT RANGE CITIES: Colorado Springs (CD 5)
Fort Collins (CD 4)
Greeley (CD4)
Pueblo (CD3)

RURAL: Grand Junction (CD 3)
Cortez/Durango (CD 3)
Dillon/Silverthorne/Frisco (CD 2)
Canyon City (CD 5)
Lamar/La Junta (CD 4)

Note: the Committee recommended more than one hearing in CDs 3 and 4 because of their size and diversity.

Purpose of CD Hearings

We remind the Commission that the purpose of these statutorily-required meetings is neither to promote the Commission nor to build communication networks. The purpose of these CD hearings is to fulfill our statutory mandate to provide informational meetings

in each Congressional District and to gather as much constructive input from as many stakeholders as possible as the Commission begins to consider the content of its final report to the General Assembly.

Hearing Topics

As has been our practice in past hearings, we will try to focus public comment on a particular topic or topics that will be useful to the Commission's work.

We will invite the public in these hearings to comment on the four proposals selected for modeling as well as the proposal developed by the Commission. We expect that the public will raise additional issues they believe are important for the Commission to consider as we make recommendations to the General Assembly.

Anticipated Travel Dates

We anticipate conducting these meetings between October 1- October 12. Again, we believe staff can set up a schedule that would allow you to either travel on two-to-four consecutive days or pick and choose travel dates throughout this period. The Committee thought this would be more viable for Commissioners than an extended two week travel period.

DECISION ITEMS:

- (1) Shall the Commission fulfill its requirement to hold hearings in each Congressional district by holding hearings in the 12 locations listed in Section 1 of this memorandum?**

Rationale: The Committee believes these choices reflect the diverse geography of the state and Congressional Districts, and provide reasonable assurance that we will hear from people representing broad communities of interest. We recognize that there are additional communities in the state where the Commission would receive valuable perspectives, but recognize the limits on Commissioners' availability.

- (2) Shall a minimum of six Commissioners attend each hearing?**

While it might be ideal for the full Commission to attend every CD hearing we believe that, given the Commission's timeline, budget and extraordinary demands on Commissioners' time, it would be most productive and efficient to send a good representation from the Commission to a larger number of communities, and accordingly recommend that a minimum of six Commissioners attend each Congressional District Hearing

Staff have begun to discuss how best to organize these hearings. One option, for instance, is to arrange a set number of two to four day "tours" that cover a number of

sites. The Committee will, with the Commission's approval, work with staff to set up hearing dates and locations and provide these to you as soon as possible. It will be important to sign up for dates as soon as possible and remain somewhat flexible with those dates until staff can make sure that at least six Commissioners can attend every hearing.

(3) Shall each Commissioner attend at least three hearings, no more than two in Front Range communities?

The expectation would be that each Commissioner attend at least three hearings, no more than two in the metro Front Range area. Commissioners, of course, are welcome and invited to attend additional meetings, and if there is sufficient interest, meetings will be scheduled in other areas of the state as discussed above.

(4) Shall the Commission schedule hearings at additional sites if there is sufficient Commissioner Availability?

Some members of the Committee would like the Commission to consider holding hearings in Golden, Craig, Sterling, Boulder, and a Front Range mountain community, such as Black Hawk.

The Committee recommends that the Commission's consideration of those additional areas be based on the Commission's assessment of whether meetings held there would provide additional information to the Commission (i.e. are we likely to hear new perspectives) and whether or not Commissioners have time to commit to additional hearings. Staff will ask Commissioners about their availability to attend hearings in additional sites, and schedule those if there is sufficient interest, once Commissioner attendance at all 12 sites listed above is confirmed.

(5) Shall the Commission continue to engage in outreach to stakeholder groups by making presentations, and shall the Commission make additional efforts to reach out to those interested parties and stakeholder groups that may not be engaged with the Commission?

The Committee engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding whether the Commission should undertake outreach beyond the CD hearings during the summer and fall months.

The Committee recommends that the Commission continue to engage in outreach to interested parties and stakeholders and engage in the presentations and discussions, as has been our practice over the last several months. The Committee believes these meetings and presentations have been effective, and recommends the only change going forward be that we engage again in a process of identifying and reaching out to stakeholder groups and interested parties who may not have participated in, or have knowledge about, the Commission process.

6. Shall the Commission hold two meetings of the full Commission outside of the Denver Metro area? If yes, shall those locations be Grand Junction and one in Pueblo?

The Committee recommends that we hold two Commission meetings outside of the Denver metro area over the next three months- one in Grand Junction and one in Pueblo and that those meetings be coordinated, as much as possible with the public hearing schedule. We note that one Commissioner disagreed with this recommendation and felt that the Commission should not hold any meetings outside of the metro area because of the already heavy demands on Commissioner's schedules. The Committee considered this position, but felt (a) it would be possible to schedule these meetings in tandem with the CD hearings; and (b) the message communicated by our willingness to travel outside the front range would substantially increase the Commission's visibility and state wideness, thereby increasing the number of people from across the state that participate in this process.

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