



Prescription for Virginia: Community Voices for Health Care



The Tour

- 40 Stops between March 8th and Sept. 12th
- Looking for perspective from ‘everyday’ people
- Guiding Questions for Discussion:
 - What should our health care system in Virginia guarantee for all people?
 - What is a fundamental health care right that we all believe is basic and compassionate?

The Participants

- Virginians who wanted to discuss health care
- Many stops were requested by concerned citizens who work in the health care field and health care consumers who are struggling with different aspects of the current system
- Biased Sample – Not ‘focus groups’

Virginians' Stories

- Uninsured Mother from Blacksburg
- Primary Care Physician from Roanoke
- Personal Care Assistant from Danville
- Dental Resident from Charlottesville
- School Nurse from Pulaski
- Aging Advocate from Culpeper
- Elderly Medicaid Recipient from Richmond
- Small Business Owner from Chester
- Parent of Mentally Ill Child from Virginia Beach

From Anecdote to Prescription



Access to Primary Care

- Providers
 - 1 physician for every 384 Virginians
 - Between 1998 and 2005, medical students choosing to practice primary care fell from 54% to 20%
 - 15 to 30 patients seen per day
- Emergency Room care
 - Serves as primary care for 5% of Richmond
 - 13% of uninsured visit ER each year
 - In 2005, hospitals donated \$113M for ER care
- Transportation

Prevention

- 7 of every 10 deaths due to five chronic diseases
 - Heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes
- Treatment of these conditions accounts for 75% of spending
- Screenings and diagnostic tests save dollars and lives
 - Mammograms every 1-2 yrs for women 40+ reduce the risk of death from breast cancer by 16%

Insurance Availability & Affordability

- Children
 - 8.8% uninsured
 - 30.2% of uninsured have no source of primary care
 - 27.5% received no medical treatment last yr
- Health Care workers
 - In 2000, Virginians age 65+ were 12% of population- by 2025, group will increase to 18%

Mental Health

- Parity
 - VA is one of 25 states with a parity law, though not comprehensive
- Capacity
 - 21.4M Americans reported severe psychological distress, less than half received treatment (2004)
 - Waiting time for psych beds is 42+ weeks
 - Over half of all jail inmates reported mental health problems within the last yr

Themes and Recommendations

1. Improve communication and consumer outreach efforts.
2. Ensure that all children and health care workers can get health insurance.
3. Eliminate barriers to health care access.
4. Tackle Virginians' public health concerns.