



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 29, 2009

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“Summit Conversation” to be Held in San Francisco as Healthcare Reform Heats up in Congress

***America’s Agenda* sponsors May 6 forum at University of California-San Francisco
at 11 a.m. (PDT)**

WASHINGTON, DC -- Overhauling America’s healthcare system is the number one legislative priority of President Obama as leaders of business, labor, health care and government prepare to convene in San Francisco for a high profile discussion on what needs to be done.

Sponsored by *The America’s Agenda Healthcare Education Fund* to highlight the emerging national consensus on key components of a modernized 21st century healthcare system, the fourth in a series of “Summit Conversations” will be held May 6 at 11 a.m. (PDT) at the University of California-San Francisco’s Mission Bay Conference Center.

Dr. Stephen L. Hauser, chair of the university’s Department of Neurology who has won national awards in recognition of his two decades of pioneering research on MS, will serve as host.

“Congress is rushing to meet President Obama’s priority of healthcare reform,” said Doug Dority, president of *America’s Agenda*. “Chairs of appropriate committees in both the House and Senate have assured the president they are prepared to move forward with this critical legislation early this summer.”

Dority noted that the rising cost of health care “is a drag on the U.S. economy.” He said escalating costs jeopardize long term economic recovery by undermining the competitiveness of American businesses and their ability to create jobs. “Health reform is economic recovery.”

The Summit will feature a discussion of the major drivers of health cost growth. Policy areas include disease prevention, management of chronic diseases, health information technology, patient and provider incentives and modernizing the American healthcare system.

The San Francisco Summit will be moderated by Bill Press, Emmy-winning political commentator. Participants will include:

- Dr. Stephen L. Hauser, Chair, Department of Neurology, UCSF (Host)

- John Arensmeyer, CEO, Small Business Majority
- Carmela Castellano-Garcia, Esq., President & CEO, California Primary Care Association
- Richard Gephardt, Former Majority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
- Mike Goodwin, International President, Office and Professional Employees International Union
- Dr. Mitchell Katz, Director of Health, San Francisco Department of Public Health
- Priya Mathur, Chair, Health Benefits Committee, CalPERS Board of Administration
- Dr. Robert Ross, President and CEO, The California Endowment
- Mr. William J. Rutter, Chairman and CEO, Synergenics, LLC; Founder and Chairman Emeritus, Chiron Corporation
- Billy Tauzin, President & CEO, PhRMA

Mark Blum, managing director and CEO for *America's Agenda*, noted that highlights of three previous Summits may be viewed at www.summitconversations.org, and the May 6 event will also be available via live streaming video.

“We have also launched a virtual march on Washington to remind leaders of the hardship, costs and sacrifices that relentless escalation in health costs is causing all Americans,” said Blum. The march, which is being held on Facebook (<http://tinyurl.com/StepsToVirtualMarch>) “lets people share their personal stories.”

Blum said pictures submitted by participants will be edited into a video clip and shared with Congress, as well as distributed online and through the media.