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Tommy Thompson to Host Wisconsin “Summit Conversation”

Healthcare forum to be held April 7 at 1 p.m. (CST) in Madison, Wisconsin

WASHINGTON, DC – Tommy G. Thompson, former Wisconsin governor, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services and Republican presidential candidate, together with the University of Wisconsin School of Law, will host the third in a series of “Summit Conversations on American Health Care for the 21st Century” on April 7 at The Edgewater Hotel in Madison.

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 high profile discussions feature outstanding leaders of business, labor, health care and government.

“Tommy Thompson’s career has been dedicated to getting things done,” said *America’s Agenda* President Doug Dority, “and health care has been his priority. As Wisconsin governor, he created a program that provided health coverage to those families whose employers don’t provide health insurance but make too much money to qualify for Medicaid. Later as HHS Secretary, he helped replicate this program in several states.”

Thompson was elected to an unprecedented four terms as governor. Healthcare reform was his major issue as a GOP presidential candidate in 2007. He emphasized preventive care, use of electronic medical records and insurance pools for the uninsured.

The Wisconsin Summit will be moderated by John Harwood, CNBC Washington Bureau Chief and writer for *The New York Times*. Participants will include:

- John Arensmeyer, CEO, Small Business Majority
- Thomas Buffenbarger, President, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
- Ann Converso, RN, President, United American Nurses
- Sharon D. Fiehler, Executive Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer, Peabody Energy
- Dick Gephardt, Former Majority Leader, House of Representatives
- Congressman Ron Kind, Wisconsin, 3rd Congressional District
- David Norton, Company Group Chairman, Worldwide Commercial and Operations, Johnson & Johnson

- Dr. Jeff Thompson, CEO, Gundersen Lutheran Health System
- John Torinus, CEO, Serigraph, Inc.

The Summit will feature a discussion of the major drivers of health cost growth that are threatening the financial health of American businesses, wages and living standards of American workers, and restoration of robust growth of the US economy. The Summit Conversation will focus on policy areas such as increased emphasis on disease prevention, greater care coordination in managing chronic diseases, improvements in health information technology and the need to restructure patient and provider incentives in a modernized American healthcare system.

The first Summit Conversation was held in January at the University of Miami with President Donna Shalala as host. Dr. William Peck, founder of the Center for Health Policy at Washington University, and former House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt were co-hosts of the second Summit, held March 10 in St. Louis.

Mark Blum, managing director and CEO for *America's Agenda*, noted that highlights of those previous Summits may be viewed at www.summitconversations.org, and the April 7 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.

A fourth Summit Conversation is scheduled for May 6 at the University of California-San Francisco with Dr. Stephen L. Hauser, chair of the Department of Neurology, as host.