



**American Hospital
Association®**

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LISTENING SESSIONS

AHA TASK FORCE ON ENSURING ACCESS IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Background

Hospitals and health systems are transforming care delivery and adapting to a new environment that includes rapid adoption of health information technology, increased pressure on health care spending, a growing abundance of non-traditional and retail health care providers and rising consumerism. While these challenges confront all hospitals and health systems today, the need to maintain a health care presence may be particularly acute among hospitals in rural communities and urban areas.

As a result, the AHA Board of Trustees approved the creation of a task force to examine ways in which hospitals can help ensure access to health care services in vulnerable rural and urban communities. Chaired by Robert Henkel, president and CEO of St. Louis-based Ascension Health, the 30-member Task Force on Ensuring Access in Vulnerable Communities consists of two subcommittees that are examining the issue from the rural and inner-city perspective. Ray Montgomery, president and CEO of Unity Health White County Medical Center in Searcy, AR, chairs the Rural Subcommittee, and Benjamin Chu, M.D., executive vice president of Pasadena, CA-based Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, chairs the Urban Subcommittee.

The task force work is ongoing – it began in September 2015 and is anticipated to conclude in spring 2016. The task force and is charged with the following:

- Confirming the characteristics and parameters of vulnerable rural and urban communities by analyzing hospital financial and operational data and other information from qualitative sources, where possible;
- Identifying emerging strategies, delivery models and payment models for health care services in rural and urban areas;
- Identifying policies/issues at the federal level that impede, or could create, an appropriate climate for transitioning to a different payment model or model of care delivery, as well as identifying policies that should be maintained.

Listening Sessions

As the task force works through these very important issues, the AHA will be conducting three listening sessions to provide a venue for members to convene and discuss items being considered by the task force (i.e., the characteristics of vulnerable rural and urban communities and identify strategies and federal policies to help ensure access to care in these areas).



The dates and locations for the listening sessions are as follows:

- **Wednesday, January 27, 2016** at the Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport from 2:30 to 5 p.m.
- **Tuesday, February 9, 2016** at the Arizona Grand Hotel in Phoenix, AZ, from 1:30 to 4:15 p.m. (this hearing will be held during the AHA Health Forum Rural Leadership Conference).
- **Tuesday, March 8, 2016** at Marriott Buckhead Hotel & Conference Center in Atlanta, GA, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Members must register to attend one of these sessions. A registration form is attached for hospital leaders interested in participating.

Structure and Process

The listening sessions will be structured dialogues led by the AHA. Specifically, each listening session will begin with an AHA presentation that provides an overview of the task force and summary of its work thus far. Then, the AHA will lead a discussion in which we anticipate participating hospital leaders will provide their thoughts and responses to the following questions:

- What characteristics and parameters define vulnerable rural and urban communities?
- Are there any characteristics and parameters that are the same for vulnerable rural and urban communities; or are there characteristics and parameters that are unique to either vulnerable rural or urban communities?
- What strategies or best practices have you utilized to provide health care services in vulnerable rural and urban communities?
- Are you aware of emerging strategies or best practices that others in the field have employed to ensure access to health care services in vulnerable rural and urban communities?
- What payment and delivery models should be considered to better address the issues faced by vulnerable rural and urban communities and ensure access to health care services in these communities?
- What federal policy issues impede or serve as barriers to creating an appropriate climate for transitioning to a different payment model or model of care delivery?
- Are there any other items or issues the task force should consider as it continues its work?

Task force members are invited to attend each of the listening sessions so that they may incorporate this feedback into the work of the task force. In addition, at the conclusion of these listening sessions, the AHA will provide a report to the task force members that summarizes the key findings and conclusions from the listening sessions.

