

National health group to form in Nashville

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A joint venture between Nashville Health Care Council and Vanderbilt University Medical Center — working with some of the top public and private officials nationwide — is creating a new innovative organization to solve many of the lingering problems facing the U.S. health care system.

The official kickoff of the new venture, Health Care Solutions Group (HCSG), is set for Oct. 24 with an event in Washington D.C. But the location of the group's offices is to be in Nashville at a VUMC building on West End Avenue

Health Care Solutions Group's future board members are a who's who of health care executives and include Jack Bovender, HCA board chairman; Mac Crawford, Caremark Rx CEO; Dr. Bob Galvin, director of corporate healthcare for General Electric; Nancy-Ann DeParle, JPMorgan senior advisor and former CMS administrator under the Clinton administration; and Congressman Jim Cooper.

"The concept for HCSG began because the solutions coming from the existing policy groups and think tanks have not really solved many of the cost and access issues in health care," said Dr. Harry Jacobson, vice chancellor for health affairs at VUMC and chairman of the Nashville Health Care Council. "There is a need for the perspective in the think tank forum of providers and those on the delivery side."

Jacobson said HCSG's mission is to analyze problems, come up with practical solutions and then go to the next step and actually implement the answers.

He said implementations would be done on a small scale at first to determine usefulness and, if successful, expanded into the broader marketplace.

The organization is planning to hold two or three summit meetings per year to bring together the best minds in health care for discussions and proposed policy. The first summit will take place in early January.

HCSG has already appointed an executive director, Dr. David Osborn, who will also remain in his present position as the head of Vanderbilt's Center for Better Health. The new organization will have its own staff with additional support coming from the Center for Better Health.

Also, a distinguished group of fellows will be selected from a diverse group of professionals in the fields of economics, information technology, health care policy, law, government, insurance, venture capital, pharmaceuticals and communications. These experts will help shape the organizations strategies and produce publications.

HCSG will serve as a clearinghouse for relevant data and work with appropriate groups to develop and propose legislation.

Nashville should benefit from the exposure of having HCSG headquartered here.

"Overall this is a great opportunity moving forward for the council and Nashville and certainly we are very pleased to be working with Vanderbilt," said Matthew Gallivan, Nashville Health Care Council president.

Gallivan said the effort has so far already received significant support from Congress and health care leaders.

"I believe it [HCSG] provides a very important benefit to support the solutions for health care... and [toward] making Nashville the nation's health care capital," Gallivan said.

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