

## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **The Missing Piece of the Health Care Reform Puzzle? A UC Report Says Focus on the Health Care User**

**Ysabel Duron, Founder of Latina's Contra Cancer and Co-Ancor of KRON-4  
Weekend Morning News, to Moderate Report Release Event**

**Senator Gilbert Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) to Provide Keynote Address**

From the White House to the State House, health care reform is the number one concern for legislators, providers, and health care patients or "consumers."

If health care reform is to meet the needs of consumers, then consumers need to become actively involved in their own care, according to a new report out of UC Berkeley entitled: *From Patients to Partners: A Consensus Framework for Engaging Californians in Their Health and Health Care*. The report was developed by the California Program on Access to Care (CPAC), a program of the UC Berkeley's School of Public Health, and was funded by the California Office of the Patient Advocate.

The report release date, July 14, 2009, occurs during the same week that the House Ways and Means Committee is initiating markups to new health care legislation.

Award-winning Bay Area journalist, Ysabel Duron, will moderate the Sacramento event highlighting the report's release. Duron is a cancer survivor and founder of Latinas Contra Cancer, a group addressing cancer support services and education for Latinos in low-income, Spanish speaking communities.

Senator Gilbert Cedillo (D-Los Angeles), who is a long time champion of health care access for all populations groups, will be a keynote speaker.

Over 40 representatives from California's academic community, health industry, media and consumer advocates contributed to the report which details issues that plague "patients" when using the U.S. health care system. The report also details concrete recommendations to engage patients so that they become "partners" in their health care.

"Our report encourages providers and health plans to use new approaches to engage consumers," said CPAC Director Gil Ojeda. "One suggested approach is to have providers use mobile phone technology to communicate with enrollees, especially those enrollees who lack access to a personal computer. Another innovative approach is to assign certain patients, say cancer patients, a personal guide, such a trained lay person, to help them sort out treatment options and deal with the health care infrastructure."

California's Office of the Patient Advocate (OPA), which funded the report, is the State agency charged with helping California's 16.5 million HMO or managed care enrollees get the proper health care services.

According to the report, consumers who can effectively navigate access to their care and benefits are far less likely to use expensive health care settings such as emergency rooms, because they will have learned how to work with a regular physician or "medical home."

By choosing high value health plans and providers, consumers can help drive improvements in quality and efficiency. By self-managing chronic conditions, consumers can improve their own outcomes, reduce expensive complications, and live full, productive lives. By engaging in healthy behaviors, consumers can prevent or delay the onset of diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and many types of cancers, which are largely triggered by unhealthy behaviors.

Recommendations included in the report call upon health care stakeholders, i.e., providers, insurance plans, advocates and the media, to help consumers play a greater role. The report urges these stakeholders to:

- Identify key information about their consumer audience, such as age, ethnicity, education and income, and then tailor messages to promote specific behavior changes or relay useful information.
- Promote messages in positive ways that enable and persuade and address consumers' fears and hopes.
- Motivate consumers to take "small steps" on the road to self-care and health care health improvement.
- Engage in collaborative outreach and promotion campaigns.

Furthermore, the report specifically urges OPA to:

- Expand outreach and partnerships with other health care groups and the media to elevate OPA's visibility to become a trusted "go to" resource.
- Work with health plans and medical groups to promote health information on Internet social networking sites such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook.
- Work with health plans and medical groups to develop condition-specific performance reports on chronic illness such as diabetes and asthma.

"Basically, our report shows that health care consumers can help reduce costs and improve the quality of health care in our state and in our nation. Consumers just need a helping hand in making wise choices," said CPAC Director Ojeda.

Event: Release of Report: "From Patients to Partners: A Consensus Framework for Engaging Californians in Their Health and Health Care"  
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2009  
Time: 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM  
Location: California Chamber of Commerce, California Room  
1215 K Street, 14th Floor  
Sacramento, California  
Contact: Donna Fox (510) 332-4065 (cell phone)

For more information on the California Program on Access to Care:

| <http://cpac.berkeley.edu/>, [http://cpac.berkeley.edu/documents/opa\\_fnlrprt.pdf](http://cpac.berkeley.edu/documents/opa_fnlrprt.pdf)

For more information on the Office of the Patient Advocate: [www.opa.ca.gov](http://www.opa.ca.gov)