Ten Questions to Ask at Town Hall Meetings

Town hall meetings are one of the most exciting ways to engage in the civic process. You’ll hear a number of different perspectives on health reform. Use these questions to help steer the conversation back to pro-reform messages.

1. It is very hard for people with pre-existing conditions to get affordable health coverage. Even worse, pre-existing conditions are numerous and arbitrarily defined by insurance companies worried about their profits. How are you going to make certain that insurers no longer have their choice of who not to cover?

2. Recent studies indicate that fewer than 20% of all US medical students are choosing primary care specialties. With tens of thousands of Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives already providing affordable, high-quality primary care, especially in rural and underserved areas, do you support recognizing NPs and Midwives as primary care providers in Health Care Reform?

3. Contrary to popular belief, almost all of the uninsured come from working families. If you work hard for a living, shouldn’t you be able to go to a provider? How are you going to make sure that working families can afford coverage, especially when some work for employers who don’t offer health benefits?

4. As a nurse, I tend to approach health care with a more holistic approach. If 75% of health care spending is spent on treating chronic conditions, why aren’t we focusing more on prevention? Why is it so hard to prove long-term financial savings?

5. I know there are problems with our health system and I understand the need for reform, but I really like the health care I get now. Are you going to work for reform that ensures I can keep my health plan and my provider?

6. Nurses are the backbone of the health care system, and coverage will mean nothing if we don’t have enough nurses to provide access to care. How will you help address the nursing shortage in Health Care Reform?

7. I’ve heard that $1,000 of the premium I pay for my family each year goes toward medical care for the uninsured. I don’t blame people for getting sick, but I simply can’t afford this. What are you going to do to make sure that more people can get health insurance?

8. My premiums keep going up—much faster than my paycheck. How are you going to make sure that health care doesn’t break my family’s budget?

9. My spouse and I are worried that one of us might lose our job. The COBRA subsidy isn’t going to last forever. How will you make sure that hard-working American families can count on quality, affordable coverage no matter what?

10. America was built on hard work and competition. It sure doesn’t feel like insurance companies are competing for my business. How will you promote competition between plans to promote choice and drive down costs?

Sources: Families USA, Herndon Alliance, Center for American Progress Action Fund, Third Way Economic Program, Health Affairs