



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **April 16 press conference kicks off *Cover the Uninsured Week***

**Community leaders will address why so many are uninsured and how it affects all of Greater Cincinnati**

CINCINNATI— The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The California Endowment, the United States Chamber of Commerce, more than 800 national and local organizations, and thousands of Americans across the U.S. will build on the success of Cover the Uninsured Week 2003 to host a week of events from May 10-14, 2004. Organizers will begin raising awareness, however, with a press conference on Friday, April 16 at 12:30 PM at the new Lincoln Heights Health Care Connection facility (under construction) at 1401 Steffen Avenue in Lincoln Heights. (**Directions: Shepard Lane / Lincoln Heights Exit # 13 on I-75, next to Taco Bell**).

Local community leaders have been invited to serve as “Champion” spokespersons and participate in media events, the kick-off rally and a policy forum. These Champions will address the public and the media regarding issues of the uninsured at the April 16 press conference. Champion spokespersons include: Michael Fisher, President, Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce; Gwen Robinson, President, Cincinnati Hamilton County Community Action Agency; and Father Michael Graham, President, Xavier University.

Cover the Uninsured Week 2004 will focus on the issue of the uninsured, and will provide answers to such questions as *Who is affected?*, *Why they are uninsured?*, and *What are the consequences of being uninsured, both physically and economically?*

The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, and the Greater Cincinnati Health Access Project are serving as conveners for local campaign activities. To date, more than 40 corporations and non-profit organizations have endorsed the need to engage the Greater Cincinnati community with the theme—*Cover the Uninsured Week: It Affects Us All*. During this week, community leaders and members will discuss solutions for the uninsured that have emerged in other states and communities. Organizers also plan to convene specific target groups to hear their perspectives on:

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- *Where are we now?*
- *What do we want to see in this community to address the issue of the uninsured?*
- *What are the community costs of the uninsured to our health care providers and businesses?*

The week will culminate in a community forum to hear solutions to the question, *How do we get there over the next three years?*

The Cover the Uninsured Week 2004 local calendar of events includes:

- Monday, May 10, 2004: Kick-Off rally, Fountain Square and Government Services Building, Hamilton, OH
- Tuesday, May 11, 2004: Business and Labor Breakfast (invited sponsors: Employer Health Care Alliance, African American Chamber of Commerce, and AFL-CIO)
- Wednesday, May 12, 2004: Community Forum Simulcast (invited host: WCET-TV, WVXU-FM Radio)
- Thursday, May 13, 2004: Faith community and social services provider training
- Friday, May 14, 2004: Policy Forum – Solutions targeting the Uninsured (invited Keynote Speaker: Dr. Reed Tuckson, Sr., Vice President, United Health Group). Dr. Tuckson will present the findings of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance and to provide a “call to action” for the Cincinnati region.

Other invited panelists include: Dr. Alan McKenzie, President, American Project Access Network and Executive Director, Buncombe County Medical Society, Asheville, N.C.; Barbara Edwards, Deputy Director, Ohio Medicaid Program; Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota; Trish Riley, Governor’s Office of Health Policy and Finance, State of Maine; and Lenscrafters. Each of these speakers will address the initiatives in his/her organization or state to provide access of healthcare and health insurance for the uninsured.

For additional information about Cover the Uninsured Week and all related local activities, contact Tony Martinez at (513) 621-7202 or [tony.martinez@hamilton-co.org](mailto:tony.martinez@hamilton-co.org).

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