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The ACP Advocate Blog by Bob Doherty

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Just a few minutes ago, President Obama wrapped up his White House Summit on Health Reform.

Dr. Jeffrey Harris, MD, FACP, represented ACP at the summit.

I will write more about the summit in future posts, but a few first impressions:

1. This President really, really wants health care reform. He believes - as he said in his opening remarks - that the U.S. has reached the point where "there no longer is a debate about whether to have health care reform, but how that reform should look and work."
2. He rejects the notion that the economic crisis works against health care reform. To the contrary, he made it clear that you can't fix the economy or sustain entitlement programs, like Medicare and Medicaid, without controlling health care costs.
3. He is willing to take on liberal activists, pointedly telling them that they are not going to be able to achieve universal coverage without controlling costs.
4. He understands the importance of primary care. During the question and answers period, he unequivocally stated that, "We have to produce more primary care physicians." Amen!

He also is determined to do everything possible to not to repeat the mistakes that the Clintons made fifteen years ago. Instead of a secret health care task force, he launched his health reform effort today by bringing together key stakeholders and members of Congress from both political parties.

None of this guarantees success. The health care NIMBY-ism that I blogged about on Monday still could cost us health care reform. But in my mind, today was a good start on beginning a process that actually might bring home the "holy grail" of health care reform.

For more information about the summit, go to <http://www.healthreform.gov/>.

Question: Did today's White House summit make you more or less optimistic about the prospects for achieving comprehensive health care reform?

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