

For Immediate Release

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**North Carolina Council on Health Care Coverage Issues
Guiding Principles to Improve Health Coverage**

Durham, NC—Today, the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, on behalf of the North Carolina Council on Health Care Coverage, released the Council’s final [guiding principles](#) to increase health coverage for North Carolinians. View a media briefing with Council member business leaders where they discuss the importance of these principles and how they build the foundation for continuing efforts to improve health care coverage for the more than 1.2 million uninsured North Carolinians [here](#).

Council members prioritized increasing affordable and comprehensive coverage for as many uninsured North Carolinians as possible and recognized that multiple solutions may be needed to reach that goal. Members also recommended that any solutions should address supporting the business community, strengthening rural communities, reducing disparities and expanding access to behavioral health services. This guidance is intended to inform Governor Roy Cooper and state legislators as they develop a plan this legislative session to improve health care in North Carolina.

The [Council](#), which was announced by Governor Cooper in December 2020, includes bipartisan members of the General Assembly and representatives from a variety of sectors including business, nonprofit, and health care. A full list of Council members is available [here](#).

During its four meetings held during December 2020 and January 2021, the Council heard from policy experts on a variety of health issues, examined national and statewide trends, and discussed a wide range of options to increase access to health coverage.

Duke-Margolis convened the Council meetings and facilitated its collaboration, which resulted in the guiding principles that were released today. “We appreciate the commitment of the Council members, who were engaged in these important discussions and represented broad and diverse perspectives on how to improve coverage for the 1.2 million uninsured in North Carolina,” said **Dr. Mark McClellan**, director of Duke-Margolis. “The guiding principles to increase coverage serve as the foundation for action to improve health care coverage in North Carolina. It is a privilege for Duke-Margolis to support this group.”

Statements from Council Members

Don Flow, Owner and CEO of Flow Automotive Companies: “Increasing health care coverage and shoring up the health care system in North Carolina can fuel economic growth, save rural hospitals, and overall, makes good business sense. This Council provided an important opportunity for a wide variety of sectors to come together and find areas where we all agree. I’m hopeful that these principles will be helpful in building a package of reforms that will lead to addition health insurance coverage and a healthier North Carolina.”

Vivian Howard, Chef, Restaurateur, and Author: “As a small business owner, I want to do everything I can to support the health of my employees. Small businesses struggle to afford health insurance for their employees and are further challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. I was so pleased to participate in this Council and share the perspectives of small business owners in rural North Carolina. The principles we developed represent values that we all agree can work towards to make North Carolinians healthier.”

Tunde Sotunde, President and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina: “This Council was instrumental in building relationships and centering around ideas that diverse sectors can all agree on. Now that we have those principles, there is a real opportunity for payers, providers, and the community to begin to think about what legislative and regulatory actions could bring these principles into a reality.”

In addition to the final principles, a summary of the Council’s four meetings can be found [here](#). The Duke-Margolis Center will continue to share regular updates with the Council and convene future meetings of the group as needed.

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