



Bringing Oregonians Together

OHA Health Care Forums



“I believe we have all worked well together to help OHA set a high standard for how to truly engage the public in Oregon.”—Marti Kantola, Six Rivers Community Mediation Center

Timeline

August – October 2010

Region

Statewide

Project Lead

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Local Coordination

Led by University of Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution, University of Oregon School of Law, with: Benton County Mediation Program; Central Oregon Mediation; Community Mediation Services; Mediation Works—A Community Dispute Resolution Center; Resolutions Northwest; Six Rivers Community Mediation Services

Facilitators

Amy Cleary, Brian Egan, Marti Kantola, and Judith Mowry

Background

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is leading the effort to create quality affordable health care in Oregon. The OHA citizen-led board selected Oregon Consensus (OC) to create a process for gathering public input on a health reform plan. OC designed and led an innovative approach by linking with community dispute resolution centers and local volunteers to conduct public meetings in Baker City, Bend, Corvallis, Medford and Portland, and by launching an online video and website allowing the public to learn about and weigh in on key health care issues remotely.

Issues and challenges

OHA faced a tight timeline for gathering input to shape its recommendations in time for the 2011 legislative session. Through the coordinated efforts of OC and the community dispute resolution centers, the forums were timely and reached a broad audience.

Results

Overall public feedback about the meetings was positive. According to Jeremy Vandehey, Community Outreach Coordinator for OHA, more than 850 people attended the community forums and more than 2000 submitted comments online during the website’s first month. Public input helped board members identify key concerns of Oregon citizens and new ideas for health reform.

Collaboration between Oregon Consensus (OC) and local dispute resolution centers reduced project cost, minimized the environmental impacts of travel, and paved the way for future partnerships.

“We are continually looking for opportunities to assist the University of Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution in their mission to build the capacity of the local community dispute resolution centers to engage in collaborative public policy projects in their cities,” said OC Director John Hummel. “This project was a great chance to combine our strengths to achieve the best results.”