

**April 2, 2008**

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**Media Note:** Photo and interview opportunities.

## Learn about local solutions for affordable health care coverage

A free educational forum that will highlight affordable health care options for families, individuals under age 65 and small businesses will take place on **Thursday, April 17**, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the North Port Community Educational Center, 4940 Pan American Boulevard in North Port. The event is being held in recognition of the national *Cover the Uninsured Week, April 27 – May 3*, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which highlights the state of the uninsured and promotes the importance of health care coverage. The event is free and open to the public. Childcare is available from Children First by calling 941-953-5507, extension 200. A light dinner will be available at 5:30 p.m.

The forum will feature a panel of industry experts who will discuss what people should look for in a small business or individual health insurance plan; affordable options in coverage for uninsured businesses and people under age 65; and other cost-saving alternatives. There will also be information about free and low-cost healthcare services and programs along with health and wellness resources. The Sarasota County Health Department's Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit will be on hand to offer screenings and other services.

The forum will **not** address Medicare questions or coverage. Panelists will provide unbiased information without intent to sell or promote any particular insurance product, plan, or vendor.

Forum sponsors include the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) in conjunction with the North Port Community Health Action Team (CHAT) and Get Sarasota County Insured, a community-based workgroup established by CHIP to develop local solutions to the health insurance needs of this community. In Sarasota County, 47,000 people, representing 18 percent of the population under age 65, does not have health insurance.

The Community Health Improvement Partnership is a private-public collaborative effort working to improve the health of Sarasota, Charlotte, and DeSoto county residents. The Sarasota County Health Department provides staffing for the program with funding from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, the Community Foundation of Sarasota, the Sarasota County Health Department, Sarasota County Government, local hospitals in Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties and the Charlotte and DeSoto county health departments.

For more information on this and future forums, contact the Community Health Improvement Partnership at 941-861-2969 or visit [www.getsarasotainsured.com](http://www.getsarasotainsured.com) and [www.chip4health.org](http://www.chip4health.org).

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