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Advocates seek suggestions on reforming health care

BY SUSAN SIMPSON Staff Writer ssimpson@opubco.com

Oklahomans for Healthcare Reform includes members from several groups already familiar to legislators for their efforts to increase insurance coverage and fight limits on medical lawsuits.

They include Wayne Rohde, who has pushed for insurance coverage for autism; Nancy Thomason, founder of the Oklahoma Brain Tumor Foundation, who has pushed for insurance coverage for clinical trials; and Jeff Raymond, executive director of OKWatchdog.

The three are hoping many more Oklahomans will share their stories and concerns about health care and take their messages to lawmakers.

Oklahomans for Healthcare Reform plans a series of town hall meetings across the state. The first was held Thursday in Noble. More are being scheduled.

"It's about talking to the citizens about what they see, what are their concerns on a daily basis," Rohde said. "We are hoping to gather data from this and pass it off to policymakers."

Thomason said rural residents may be especially isolated from state agencies and lawmakers based in Oklahoma City.

"We can change the mind-set at the Capitol, which has been very proinsurance company and very anti-citizens of Oklahoma," she said.

Other goals include preventing insurance companies from turning away people with pre-existing conditions and from considering the health status of workers when setting rates.



From left, Sen. Kenneth Corn, D-Poteau, Rep. Joe Dorman, D-Rush Springs, Rep. Eric Proctor, R-Tulsa and Rep. Scott Martin, R-Norman, were panelists at a town hall meeting Thursday in Noble organized by Oklahomans for Healthcare

Reform. PHOTO BY JACONNA AGUIRRE, THE OKLAHOMAN