

THE DAILY NEWS

400 expected at meeting on health care, immigration

Local assemblymen expected to attend

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More than 400 people are expected to gather today to urge local elected officials to work toward lowering health care costs and achieving immigration reform.

Two state legislators are scheduled to speak at the event organized by Peninsula Interfaith Action, an advocacy organization with a membership of about 20,000 people in 30 congregations from Daly City to Mountain View.

The theme is "Healthy and United Families," blending the issues of "unaffordable health care and inhumane immigration policies," according to the group.

The group says health care reforms should include a sliding scale for contributions — so lower-income families have low out-of-pocket costs — and a guarantee of standard benefits.

It also believes the government should reform visa programs to give illegal immigrants an opportunity to become permanent residents. Among the officials expected to attend today's event are state assemblymen Ira Ruskin, D-Redwood City, and Jim Beall, D-San Jose, who will hear presentations by Peninsula residents who have had difficulty with immigration policies or the health care system.

The event is intended to provoke discussion about the issues and connect residents with their local representatives, and to change "a broader climate of voter alienation, apathy, disengagement," group leader Thomas Atwood said.

"This is our first kick-off meeting for what we hope is a long campaign until we get these reforms enacted," Atwood said.

The event will take place today from **3 to 4:30** p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 2915 Broadway, Redwood City.