

WEB LETS GROUPS TRACK GATHERINGS ON HEALTH CARE

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Bring "hard questions" -- and some nonperishable food.

As the national debate over health care reform plays out in congressional districts this month, that advice was included in a South Florida Tea Party e-mail encouraging opponents of the Democratic plan to show up next week at a suburban Boynton Beach community forum where U.S. Rep. Ron Klein is scheduled to speak.

But things change quickly in the rapid-response world of modern politics.

The Coalition of Boynton West Residential Associations will allow visitors and accept donations for its food drive at Wednesday's meeting with Klein, but the group won't allow nonmembers to speak.

So the conservative Tea Party organization sent a revised e-mail noting the restriction but saying the meeting still would be "a great opportunity to try" to question Klein, D-Boca Raton.

Groups on the left and right are using e-mails and Internet social networking sites to alert activists to public appearances by members of Congress during the August recess.

Some of the events are meetings where representatives will discuss health care with members of the public. Others, including Klein's **COBWRA** appearance, are not.

In addition to publicizing Klein's appearance near Boynton, the Tea Party e-mail highlighted a "town hall" meeting this afternoon at U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson's Coral Gables office.

But that event turned out to be a rally by the liberal group Organizing For America, so in a revised Tea Party e-mail described it as an opportunity to counter-protest.

Klein plans a "telephone town hall" on health care later this month, but he has not yet announced a specific date and time. Republicans accused him of ducking the public, but Klein said he can reach more constituents with the teleconference than with a traditional meeting.

U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney, R-Tequesta, will hold a health care forum at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the Wolf High-Technology Center at the Stuart campus of Indian River State College.

U.S. Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Boca Raton, is scheduled to speak at a health care forum sponsored by the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans at 1 p.m. Aug. 20 at the South County Civic Center west of Delray Beach.

U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Miramar, has not announced any health care-related events.

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