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## Rupp, Rangel to brief U.S. Congress

By J. J. Lee

*Spectator Staff Writer*

University President George Rupp and Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) will brief members of Congress on a report calling for special consideration to be paid to the health care needs of inner cities, today in the Cannon Caucus Room on Capitol Hill.

The report, entitled "Health Care in Undeserved Urban America: Implications for National Health Reform," was developed during a University-sponsored conference held June 7-8 at the Harlem Hospital Center.

The conference featured 21 public health policy makers, hospital administrators, physicians, and urban health care experts from Columbia's Health Sciences division and the New York City area.

Rangel hosted the conference with former University President Michael Sovern.

Rupp and Rangel will emphasize the need to incorporate into the national health care plan comprehensive measures in education, prevention, and other social services needed most by those living in inner cities, according to a University statement on the address.

“The needs of our undeserved populations are too easily ignored because they sometimes have no voice,” Rupp stated in a June 7 letter to Rangel and Sovern. “I hope to join both of you, and others as well, to be sure that the lessons of your urban health conference are well understood by our government at all levels.”

Americans living at or below the poverty line in urban areas are at great risk of developing serious

health problems, due to a variety of factors, such as crime, drugs, and overcrowded and substandard housing, the report states.

Dr. Colin McCord and Dr. Harold Freeman, director of surgery at the Harlem Hospital Center, were quoted in the report as having summed up the status of health care in America's inner cities.

"[A] black male growing up in Harlem has less of a chance of reaching the age of 65 than a male growing up in the Third-World country of Bangladesh," Freeman said in the report.

The report lists 11 "essential ingredients" for health care reform in the inner city, emphasizing preventive and education measures that could save billions of dollars in long-term costs. The recommendations include universal coverage starting with the most vulnerable segment of the population; broad benefits with specialized services for special populations, such as babies with AIDS; increased emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention; programs that address root causes of poor health, such as poverty and homelessness; outreach programs and other services that guarantee effective and practical access to care, continu-

ity of care, and follow-up care; and increased production of primary care providers, especially those who will serve the urban poor.

In addition, the report calls for national health care reform to include services that are community-based and culturally sensitive, and for continued support for urban hospitals and medical centers serving poor urban populations.

The health of infants and children who are subject to the debilitating effects associated with poverty is also addressed in the report as an issue of special concern.

Scheduled to speak following Rupp's and Rangel's briefing are Dr. Gerald Thomson, associate dean of the College of Physicians and Surgeons; Dean of the School of Public Health Allan Rosenfield; and Professor Lawrence Brown, director of the Division of Health Policy and Management at the School of Public Health.



SPECTATOR/DYLAN TAUBER

Merit Janow, adjunct professor of international affairs and a former trade negotiator, spoke about trade negotiations between Japan and the United States at the East Asian Institute yesterday.