

# COME TOGETHER ON PATIENT-CENTERED REFORM

Dear Members of Congress,

We encourage all stakeholders – government officials, patients and families, insurers, doctors and nurses, and employers – to work together to pass reforms that provide quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

We believe there must be two core elements in any successful reform measure:

- Create a cost-effective Medicare payment system by establishing incentives for doctors and hospitals to offer the highest quality care at the most reasonable cost. This will reduce unnecessary procedures and ensure Medicare is viable for future generations.
- Coordinate basic, private insurance offerings and provide sliding-scale subsidies to enable all Americans to purchase health insurance.

A reminder of why the status quo in health care is unsustainable:

- More than 46 million Americans are uninsured, resulting in expensive emergency room visits and uncompensated care;
- The skyrocketing costs of health care consume about 17 percent of the gross domestic product;
- Uneven quality and safety of medical care contribute to about 100,000 deaths from medical errors each year;
- Doctors and hospitals are rewarded for the number of procedures they perform, not for performance. As a result, the system encourages unnecessary tests that increase costs;
- An increasing number of physicians are closing their practices to Medicare and Medicaid patients because reimbursement doesn't cover costs; and
- In 2011, the first baby boomers will qualify for Medicare. This marks the beginning of a huge influx of Medicare beneficiaries and will put significant strain on Medicare's already precarious financial position.

**Reforming health care in America will not become easier with the passage of time.**

Each major stakeholder plays a role in reform and must take responsibility for improving health care – be it a patient making a commitment to a healthier lifestyle or a physician investing in health information technology for sharing medical records. We encourage lawmakers and all with a stake in ensuring that patients receive high-quality, affordable care to come together to support reform legislation aimed at achieving the best health care for all Americans, now and in the future.

Sincerely,

**John Noseworthy**, M.D., President & CEO, Mayo Clinic  
**Karen Ignagni**, President & CEO, AHIP  
**R. Bruce Josten**, Executive Vice President, Government Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
**Toby Cosgrove**, M.D., President & CEO, Cleveland Clinic  
**Mary Grealy**, President, Healthcare Leadership Council  
**Casey Ryan**, M.D., President, Altru Health System  
**Ronald A. Williams**, Chairman & CEO, Aetna  
**Daniel E. Neufelder**, President & CEO, Affinity Health System  
**Denis Cortese**, M.D., Arizona State University  
**Nick Turkal**, M.D., President & CEO, Aurora Health Care  
**Thomas A. Colacchio**, M.D., President, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health  
**Peter Person**, M.D., CEO, Essentia Health  
**Richard H. Cooper**, CEO, The Everett Clinic  
**Rob Nesse**, M.D., President & CEO, Franciscan Skemp Healthcare  
**Glenn D. Steele Jr.**, M.D., Ph.D, President & CEO, Geisinger Health System  
**Jeff Thompson**, M.D., CEO, Gundersen Lutheran Health System  
**Mary Brainerd**, President & CEO, HealthPartners (MN)  
**Karl J. Ulrich**, M.D., MMM, President & CEO, Marshfield Clinic  
**Michael Kitchel**, M.D., President, McFarland Clinic  
**Lawrence J. Massa**, President & CEO, Minnesota Hospital Association  
**Alfred B. Knight**, M.D., President & CEO, Scott & White Healthcare  
**Gary S. Kaplan**, M.D., Chairman & CEO, Virginia Mason Health System  
**Susan L. Turney**, M.D., CEO & Executive Vice President, Wisconsin Medical Society



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