

STAND FOR QUALITY
in Health Care

November 20, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman,
Senate Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
SH-511
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman,
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
U.S. Senate
SH-731
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Dodd
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
U.S. Senate
SR-448
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Stand for Quality comments on H.R. 3590, “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act”

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Chairman Baucus, Chairman Harkin, Senator Dodd:

Our organizations are united in the belief that the people who advocate for the rights of patients and consumers, deliver care, operate health plans, manufacture drugs and other devices, purchase care and regulate care on the public’s behalf can come together to transform health care in America to be safer, more effective and more efficient. We wish to congratulate you for including in the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” multiple provisions that can support significant delivery system reform to improve the quality of patient care.

Our organizations, along with 200 other health care stakeholder groups, came together earlier this year to ensure that health reform builds on the lessons of quality measurement and improvement learned over the past ten years – a period in which these efforts grew from scant ideas to an exciting vision of a transformed health care delivery system.

We earlier shared with you our findings and recommendations in the Stand for Quality report “Building a Foundation for High Quality, Affordable Health Care.” We met with you and your staff on numerous occasions to explain our work and discuss how best these lessons-learned can be applied to the great endeavor on which the Congress is now embarked.

We appreciate that the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” provides a multi-stakeholder, public-private quality framework with the policy elements necessary to transform care because it:

- Establishes National Priorities and Goals through a multi-stakeholder process to guide measure development, reporting and improvement activities and assess progress in achieving them.
- Enhances a robust structure for developing and endorsing consensus measures within health care that are critical to our efforts to continuously improve and gauge our progress over time.
- Challenges providers, clinicians, insurers and purchasers to develop methodologies for improving the quality of care and reforming payments to promote value and re-engineer care delivery.
- Provides for development and testing of innovative care models such as “medical homes” and accountable care organizations and of methods to engage patients in shared decision-making.
- Provides resources for fostering the development and dissemination of innovative methodologies and strategies to improve care delivery and provides practitioners with game-changing tools and techniques to help them improve practice and decision-making at the point of care.
- Provides for coordinated and consistent public-private sector data collection and aggregation and leverages emerging health information technology to reduce the burden of data collection while improving patient care.
- Focuses resources to strengthen the healthcare workforce, especially in the area of primary care.

Very importantly, in many of these areas, your legislation makes use of existing and proven public-private sector structures, instead of relying solely on government entities. Engaging all stakeholders will lead to more rapid and sustained change throughout the entire healthcare financing and delivery system.

When considering improvements to the legislation before the Senate, we encourage you to increase the funding for the essential task of the multi-stakeholder consultative process. We believe that better funding carried throughout the ten years of the legislation would accelerate the improvement of quality and efficiency of the care delivered.

Transforming care is at once an urgent need and a long-term process. The major changes at the core of transforming care will take time and need to engender the trust and support of those who provide, purchase and receive health care goods and services. We have learned in our work over the past decade that bold undertakings paired with patience and care is critically important to success. We need to approach these structural changes with great care. We, and you, owe the American people the highest possible level of commitment to getting

things right. Again, congratulations for including in the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” multiple provisions that can support significant delivery system reform to improve the quality of patient care.

Sincerely,

The Stand for Quality Steering Committee

Janet M. Corrigan, Ph.D., M.B.A., President and Chief Executive Officer, National Quality Forum

Rita Munley Gallagher, Ph.D., R.N., Senior Policy Fellow, American Nurses Association

Charles N. Kahn III, M.P.H., President, Federation of American Hospitals

Peter V. Lee, J.D., Executive Director for National Health Policy, Pacific Business Group on Health

Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform at the Brookings Institution and Leonard D. Schaeffer Chair in Health Policy Studies

Debra L. Ness, President, National Partnership for Women & Families

William L. Roper, M.D., M.P.H., Dean, UNC School of Medicine, Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs and CEO, UNC Healthcare System (Chair, National Quality Forum)

John C. Rother, Executive Vice President, Policy and Strategy, AARP

Gerald M. Shea, Assistant to the President for Governmental Affairs, AFL-CIO

John Tooker, M.D., M.B.A., F.A.C.P., Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer, American College of Physicians