



September 15, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus  
United State Senate  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
United States Senate  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Baucus and Senator Grassley,

As health care providers who are dedicated to providing high-quality patient care, we applaud the on-going effort in the Senate to reform the health care system in America. Representing clinics, hospitals and health care associations committed to improving the health status of millions of Americans we believe that the status quo which incents high-volume care is not a viable option. We are united in the view that Congress must change the care delivery and payment systems as part of its effort to improve health care in America.

We encourage the Senate to consider reform that will fundamentally change and properly incent the delivery of high value care to the patient. Specifically, we believe health delivery reform should include payment that is based on a value index that corrects payment disparities. In order to produce high value health care for patients, the payment system must reward the provision of high value health care, not high volume health care.

President Obama has been clear that health delivery reform should include payment for the value provided to the patient. The President's concern is best illustrated through his frequent citation to the *New Yorker* article that focused on the high cost of health care in McAllen, Texas and how higher costs did not translate into better quality. Similarly, the author advocates medical providers like us have been able to prove that we can effectively manage the full complexity of medical care. We urge you look to us as models and resources as proposals are developed.

Health care providers must work together to create value: quality outcomes, a safe environment and satisfied patients at a reasonable cost over time. We encourage the Senate to take action to ensure reform will support models of care that work best for communities, while establishing payment mechanisms that financially reward providers who deliver value.

Health reform that focuses on patients and creates high value health will benefit everyone. We believe that our experience of providing patients with high quality at reasonable costs can help inform the health reform debate. Through a value-based payment system, we believe that quality will be improved, while simultaneously bending the cost curve to make healthcare more affordable to citizens.

Sincerely,

*Affinity Health System*

*Alegent Health*

*Aurora Health Care*

*Bellin Health System*

*Dean Health System*

*Essentia Health*

*Everett Clinic*

*Group Health Cooperative*

*Gundersen Lutheran Health System*

*The Iowa Clinic*

*Marshfield Clinic*

*Mayo Health System*

*Minnesota Hospital Association*

*North Dakota Hospital Association*

*Park Nicollet*

*Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative*

*South Dakota Association of Hospitals*

*Wisconsin Hospital Association*

*Wisconsin Medical Society*

Cc: Senate Finance Committee