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.

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,

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

John Noseworthy, M.D., President & CEO, Mayo Clinic
Karen Ignagni, President & CEO, AHIP
R. Bruce Jordon, Executive Vice President, Government Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Toby Cosgrove, M.D., President & CEO, Cleveland Clinic
Mary Deely, President, Healthcare Leadership Council
Casey Ryan, M.D., President, Altus Health Systems
Ronald A. Williams, Chairman & CEO, Aetna
Daniel E. Neuholder, President & CEO, Affinity Health System
Dennis Curtin, M.D., Arizona State University
Mark Turula, M.D., President & CEO, Aplast Health Care
Thomas A. Colacchio, M.D., President, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health
Peter Porco, M.D., CEO, Essentia Health
Richard F. Cooper, CEO, Tufts Medical Center
Rob Ness, M.D., President & CEO, Franciscan Skemp Healthcare
Glenn D. Swallow, Jr., M.D., PhD, President & CEO, Geisinger Health System
Jeff Thompson, M.D., CEO, Gunderson 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. Musa, 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. Turner, M.D., CEO & Executive Vice President, Wisconsin Medical Society

For more information visit: www.qualitycoalition.net/ www.mayoclinic.org/healthpolicycenter/