

April 2, 2009

Dear Mr. President:

As members of Hope Street Group's Bipartisan Working Group, we are a part of a bipartisan coalition of major health care industry stakeholders including patient, and hospital associations, health insurance providers, political leaders, industry CEOs, and foundation executives. We applaud your unwavering commitment to immediate, substantive reform of our national health care system, and to your inclusive and collaborative efforts to build broad-based support for change.

On February 24th, you told the nation that "[T]he cost of our health care has weighed down our economy and the conscience of our nation long enough . . . health care reform cannot wait, it must not wait, and will not wait another year"

You are absolutely right that we are facing an urgent crisis and that Americans cannot endure another year without comprehensive reform. Millions lack health insurance and an unprecedented number of Americans are just one medical disaster away from bankruptcy. But our current health care system needs to be fixed, not just expanded. It is costly, inefficient, and unsustainable, it is far more successful in treating rather than preventing illnesses, and misaligned payment incentives reward physicians and hospitals for the quantity of care rather than the quality of care they provide.

If we do not act quickly and decisively to expand access, control current and future costs, and get more value for every health care dollar, we will significantly hamper our chances for sustained economic recovery; and our ability to ensure economic opportunity for all Americans will diminish.

During the past year, Hope Street Group's Bipartisan Working Group has built bipartisan and cross-sector consensus around eight core principles of health care reform. We believe all of these principles can and should be incorporated into national proposals for two reasons: in addition to being thoroughly researched and debated by leading health care innovators and experts, they represent a multi-stakeholder consensus that can be built upon further.

Eight Principles of Health Care Reform:

1. Guarantee and enforce high quality, basic health care coverage including preventative care for all Americans and provide appropriate subsidies in order to ensure affordable coverage to all regardless of health status.
2. Create new payment and incentive models that move away from fee-for-service billing by utilizing or promoting coordinated care and rewarding higher value and better quality outcomes and efficient resource use.
3. Allow faster generic drug introductions while improving incentives for product development that significantly increase health.

4. Provide early prevention incentives and strengthen primary care provisions to change behavior both inside and outside of the health care delivery system in order to bend the cost curve and change unhealthy costly societal norms.
5. Establish a dynamic, independent, comparative effectiveness entity with dissemination authority in order to encourage widespread adoption of more effective practices.
6. Require quality and price transparency for all health care participants in order to enable consumers to make informed, value-conscious decisions.
7. Promote investments to make the “wiring” of the health care system more low-cost and useful to physicians and patients who will most benefit from better quality, lower administrative and clinical costs, and an easier to use system.
8. Promote a health care system that is both fiscally responsible and sustainable, with changes to the health care delivery system designed to reduce system wide future health care cost growth, including for federal and state government funded programs.

As you can see, the principles developed by Hope Street Group’s Bipartisan Working Group are closely aligned to the principles you have already set forth in the Office of Management and Budget Report, *A New Era of Responsibility: Renewing America’s Promise*. We developed our principles with an emphasis on achievable root cause changes that have broad support and we strongly urge you to build upon your recommendations by promoting coordinated care, realigning payment incentives, and allowing faster generic drug introductions in order to bend the cost curve and provide quality care to all Americans. Hope Street Group is committed to working with you in a bipartisan way to achieve our common goals.

Thank you for leadership and willingness to invest political capital in improving our health care system. Millions of families will see significant increases in economic opportunity as a result of your commitment. We look forward to working with you in any way that we can.

Please feel free to contact Hope Street Group’s Executive Director, Monique Nadeau at (703) 389-9124 or Monique@hopestreetgroup.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Senator Bob Bennett
Utah (R)

Phil Edmundson
Chairman & CEO, William Gallagher Associates
ACT! Coalition of Massachusetts

Peter Lee
Executive Director, National Health Policy
Pacific Business Group on Health

Sr. Carol Keehan
President & CEO, Catholic Health Association

Len Nichols, Ph.D.
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David M. Walker
President & CEO, Peter Peterson Foundation
Fmr. Comptroller General of the United States

Andy Slavitt
CEO, Ingenix

Charles E.M. Kolb
President, Committee for Economic Development

CC: The Honorable Harry Reid, The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, The Honorable Mitch McConnell, The Honorable John Boehner, The Honorable Steny Hoyer, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate Committee Energy & Natural Resources, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation, and the Committee on Ways and Means, The Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, New Democrat Coalition, The Tuesday Group, Republican Main Street Partnership

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Hope Street Group is a bipartisan non-profit dedicated to building an Opportunity Economy in America, where anyone who works hard and invests in themselves has the opportunity to succeed, and where our nation prospers as a result. It convenes business, political and civic leaders online and in person to formulate policy proposals; educates policy makers about the foundations of economic opportunity; builds community and support for its American Dream Agenda; and provides a platform for social entrepreneurs to be heard and to engage on economic opportunity issues.