

STAND FOR QUALITY
in Health Care

September 21, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Comments on the Senate Finance's America's Healthy Future Act of 2009

Dear Chairman Baucus:

Stand for Quality, a coalition of more than 200 organizations focused on improving the quality and affordability of health care, commends you for including in the America's Healthy Future Act of 2009 specific proposals for strengthening the health care quality infrastructure.

We are heartened that the proposed quality provisions in the America's Healthy Future Act of 2009 builds on many of the recommendations our coalition set forth in March 2009 in *Building a Foundation for High Quality, Affordable Health Care: Linking Performance Measurement to Health Reform*. We believe that reform should build on the momentum that has been generated by public-private collaborative activities already underway to promote improvement in health care quality and affordability. By building on current activities to create a sustainable infrastructure to support and improve the nation's capacity to set priorities for quality improvement, develop new quality measures, assure that measurement is a constructive tool to foster quality improvement, and establish efficient data collection processes, we will improve care, lower costs, and achieve our shared goal of making high-quality, affordable health care available to all.

Stand for Quality appreciates your call for expanded public support for a national quality improvement strategy, coordinated priority setting, development of new measures and ensuring consultative processes to engage the full range of stakeholders in the use of measures for payment or public reporting.

A fundamental building block of virtually all of the transformative programs you have included in your draft is a robust quality enterprise capable of measuring, reporting, and improving patient care. One critical element of the quality enterprise is ensuring coordinated and consistent public-private sector data collection and aggregation. By relying on emerging health information technology we can reduce the administrative burden of data collection while improving care. In addition, fostering the development and dissemination of innovative quality improvement methodologies and strategies and providing practitioners with game-changing tools and techniques to improve practice and decision-making is critical.

We applaud your leadership on health reform and look forward to working with you to strengthen provisions in regard to 1) further development of constructive tools to foster quality improvement, and 2) support for a robust data aggregation and collection mechanism. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the Steering Committee members.

Sincerely,

Stand for Quality Steering Committee

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