



December 4, 2009

The Honorable Russ Feingold
United States Senate
506 Senate Hart
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feingold:

We're strongly supportive of your efforts to make the Accountable Care Organization (ACO) provisions within The Senate Health Reform legislation meaningful for hospitals and physician groups located in already high performing areas of the nation. We are also pleased that your amendment recognizes the essential role Critical Access Hospitals play in delivering high quality care and essential access throughout rural America.

Your amendment insures that high quality, low cost delivery organizations are allowed to participate in future Medicare savings incentives by including a national cost benchmark in the metrics used to determine payment incentives. Absent such a standard, the years of hard work and coordinated care efforts that have led to exceptional performance and current low Medicare per capita spending would be unrecognized going forward.

Many of our hospital and physician groups are already organized as ACOs. The mature level of delivery integration in Wisconsin and other areas of the nation has saved the Medicare program BILLIONS of dollars over the past several years. Health reform must be about rewarding VALUE.... the very type of health care outcomes we are already achieving and are determined to improve upon in the future. Your amendment will accelerate that important goal.

Sincerely,

Stephen F. Brenton
President
WHA

Tim Size
Executive Director
RWHC

Ashok Rai, M.D.
President & CEO
Prevea Health

Susan L. Turney
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