

April 28, 2009



Dear Senator,

***Regarding Health Care Payment Reform***

U.S. PIRG, the Federation of State Public Interest Research Groups, is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organization. U.S. PIRG and our state affiliates stand up to powerful interests on behalf of the public interest through policy analysis, research, and strong citizen engagement. Today, I write to urge your support of several health care delivery reform bills that promote quality and value in America's health care system.

U.S. PIRG's recent reports *Paying for What Works* and *Health Care in Crisis* have spotlighted the skewed incentives that drive up costs and undermine quality of care in America. Comprehensive health reform under consideration this year presents the best opportunity in generations to right these incentives, while simultaneously addressing the other dimensions of America's health care crisis.

The bills listed below would help shift incentives toward more coordination, lower costs and higher quality. U.S. PIRG urges your support, and, where appropriate, co-sponsorship of them. They are each worthy of inclusion in a broader health reform package or passage as stand-alone legislation.

- ✓ **Geriatric Screening and Assessment Act of 2007** (Senator Blanche Lincoln/Representative Gene Green): Yet to be introduced in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, this bill would provide geriatric assessments and care coordination to Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic diseases and/or dementia who generate the most costs and are ill-served by current care systems.
- ✓ **The Independence at Home Act of 2008** (Senator Ron Wyden/Representative Ed Markey): Yet to be introduced in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, this bill would establish a voluntary demonstration project providing coordinated care services to Medicare beneficiaries with multiple chronic diagnoses.
- ✓ **S. 225/S. 314 the Children's Health Care Quality Act of 2009** (Senator Evan Bayh/Senator Orrin Hatch): This bill would promote the development and measurement of performance and quality in pediatric care, while establishing demonstration projects to improve health delivery within SCHIP and Medicaid.
- ✓ **S. 652/H.R. 1614 Community Coalitions for Access and Quality Improvement Act of 2009** (Senator Patty Murray/Representative Gene Green): This legislation would provide grants to assist communities in developing integrated delivery of health care.
- ✓ **H.R. 1676 The QUALITY First Act of 2009** (Representative Jason Altmire): This legislation would require the reporting of inpatient hospital care quality measures, facilitate the development of additional measures, and provide support and assistance to hospitals failing to perform.
- ✓ **S. 438, Improved Medical Decision Incentive Act of 2009** (Senator Sheldon Whitehouse): This proposed law would authorize states to participate in the voluntary development of best practices and to provide payment incentives within Medicare and Medicaid to promote the adoption of those best practices.

These bills are significant steps forward in the health care debate. **U.S. PIRG urges your support for and, where appropriate, co-sponsorship of these important pieces of legislation.** Please contact me at [lmcneely@pirg.org](mailto:lmcneely@pirg.org) or (202)546-9707 if you wish to discuss these or other related health care issues.

Yours truly,

Larry C. McNeely II  
Health Care Advocate