

Utahns for Sustainable Health Reform

U-SHARE

Working toward affordable, high-quality health care for all Utahns.

June 19, 2009

Dear Members of Utah's Congressional Delegation,

Thank you for making health system reform one of your top priorities and for your leadership in Congress and on the Senate Finance and HELP committees. We are excited that Utah will play such a prominent role in the national reform discussion.

Utahns for Sustainable Health Reform (U-SHARE) is a growing coalition of business, community and provider organizations, and individuals united to support comprehensive reform of our health system that ensures affordable, high-quality health care for all Utahns. U-SHARE members have developed a set of principles for health reform that stand on the three pillars of expanding access, improving quality, and containing costs. To this end, U-SHARE members believe that reforms should find an appropriate balance between the private and public sectors in delivering quality, cost-effective health care and coverage. We strongly urge you to consider these principles during your discussions on this vital topic.

U-SHARE has developed four principles to help guide reform efforts:

1. Strengthen personal and shared responsibility
2. Ensure affordability and access to care
3. Align treatment and financing incentives with evidence-based medicine
4. Focus on wellness and prevention

These are the "filters" through which we assess all health system reform proposals (please see the included brochure for a detailed explanation of the principles). Using these principles as a guide, we will review legislative proposals and provide additional comments to you throughout the summer as concepts become legislation.

U-SHARE is also taking an active role in Utah's state based efforts to reform our health care system. We believe legislative action is useful and necessary at both state and federal levels. For more information, please visit our website: www.ushare-utah.org.

Utah's health care system faces significant and urgent challenges. Those with health insurance pay as much as 17 percent more in premiums to cover the costs of those without health insurance. More than 300,000 Utahns lack health coverage, and the percentage of Utah private-sector employers offering health insurance is rapidly declining. To top it all off, an estimated 20 to 40 percent or more of all U.S. health care spending has no medical value. Utah, like the rest of the nation, needs health system reform this year. We hope you will take an active role in achieving comprehensive reforms that control costs, increase quality and ensure access.

Sincerely,

Linn Baker and Cathy Chambless
U-SHARE Co-Chairs