



October 21, 2008

His Excellency Deval Patrick, Governor  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Health Care Quality and Cost Council

Dear Governor Patrick:

We are writing on behalf of business groups and health plans committed to ensuring the success of the state's Health Care Reform Law and the goal of providing high-quality, affordable health care coverage to all Massachusetts residents.

We understand that the economic climate presents enormous challenges for the Commonwealth and we appreciate the difficult decisions that you and your Administration face. We are concerned, however, that the planned reduction in the Health Care Quality and Cost Council's (Council) funding, a 37 percent decrease, and the suggestion of collapsing this work into another agency may have the effect of losing focus of staff dedicated to the work of the Council and making these efforts secondary under a new agency. We are concerned with the impact such a measure will have on the ability to accomplish the end goals of cost containment and increased transparency.

The Health Care Reform Law created the Council expressly for the purposes of establishing quality improvement and cost containment goals for the Commonwealth, charging it with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a consumer website that makes comparative cost and quality information of health care services in Massachusetts available to the public. The business community and health plans strongly supported the Council's mission and specifically the availability of a public website as part of Health Care Reform. The expectation was that the website would serve as an important resource for employers and consumers, giving them the information they need in their decision-making relative to whom and where to receive medical services, resulting in better care and lower costs.

The Council has missed several deadlines, as set out in the Health Care Reform Law, and is now just weeks away from launching the statutorily required website, which has been delayed almost two years. We urge you to commit to the website being operational by next month as scheduled and that staff to oversee implementation and maintenance of the website be dedicated to administer both the website and other initiatives set by the Council, including those initiatives included in the Cost Containment Law (Chapter 305 of the Acts of 2008).

Controlling health care costs remain as the key issue surrounding the long-term sustainability of health reform and for managing the Commonwealth's budget over the long-term. With approximately half of the state's budget devoted to health care related costs, state officials must devote the resources necessary to finding ways to improve our health care delivery system, make it more efficient, and improve the results. The Council's website is a critical component to helping us all get a handle on health care costs,

to driving quality improvement, and to providing consumers with the data they need to make thoughtful and informed decisions about their care, especially now that they are required to have insurance pursuant to the individual mandate.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of us should you or your staff wish to discuss this matter in further detail. We thank you in advance for your consideration.

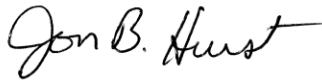
Sincerely,



Eileen McAnneny  
SVP, Government Affairs & Associate General Counsel  
Associated Industries of Massachusetts



Alan G. Macdonald, Executive Director  
Massachusetts Business Roundtable



Jon B. Hurst, President  
Retailers Association of Massachusetts



Peter Forman, President & CEO  
South Shore Chamber of Commerce



A. Theodore Welte, CCE, President & CEO  
MetroWest Chamber of Commerce



Jean Russell, President  
MA Association of Health Underwriters



Marylou Buyse, M.D., President  
MA Association of Health Plans

cc: JudyAnn Bigby, M.D., Chair, Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Elizabeth Capstick, Deputy Auditor of Administration and Finance, Office of the Auditor  
John Auerbach, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Charles Baker, President and CEO, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care  
Kevin Beagan, Director, State Rating Bureau, Division of Insurance  
James B. Conway, Senior Vice President, Institute for Healthcare Improvement  
David Friedman, First Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General  
Sarah Iselin, Commissioner, Division of Health Care Finance and Policy  
Leslie A. Kirwan, Secretary, Executive Office for Administration & Finance  
Kenneth A. LaBresh, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Mass-PRO  
Joseph Lawler, Certified Employee Benefits Specialist, The Gaudreau Group  
Thomas Lee, M. D., Network President, Partners Healthcare Systems Inc.  
Shannon Linde, Managing Partner, MBA Group  
Dolores Mitchell, Executive Director, Group Insurance Commission  
Gregory Sullivan, Inspector General  
Anya Rader Wallack, Ph.D., Executive Director, Massachusetts Medicaid Policy Institute