



Summary Assessment

REF: Affordable Health Care for America Act - HR 3962

Updated November 4, 2009

General Comments

- Very comprehensive reform package that lays the groundwork for providing changes and incentives to the delivery system that will reduce waste and improve outcomes over time.
- Strong, thoughtful approach to Medicare payment reform that will result in implementation of recommendations
- Recognition and inclusion of initiatives important and in some cases in process in Washington State and Whatcom County. Specifics include a focus on wellness and prevention, expanding support for primary care training, creating opportunities for state and community level pilot projects and innovations and recognition of the importance of consumer engagement in reducing costs and improving outcomes.

Specific Comments Relative to WAHA Reform Principles

- 1. Insurance and care for all people at all times regardless of age, employment status, economic circumstances and preexisting conditions**
 - *Bill effectively addresses underwriting issues relative to age, health status and pre-existing conditions and creates level playing field for public and private market*
 - *Bill provides options for all individuals (including low income) and most businesses to access affordable and in some cases subsidized health coverage through the exchange or through Medicare or Medicaid*
- 2. Improve patient outcomes and reduce waste through improved care coordination, and a focus on primary care and preventive care.**
 - *Emphasis on reduction of waste and fraud throughout bill including provisions in Medicare and Medicaid changes are seen as addressing this issue*
 - *Reform elements throughout bill to increase primary care training including expanding residency options seen as positive*
 - *Medical home recognition and including support of medical home pilot programs and shared decision making seen as effective*
 - *Elimination of co-payments and deductibles for preventive services in Medicare and Medicaid supports access to preventive care*
 - *Grant program to help small employers to strengthen workplace wellness programs and support of community preventive services grants seen as important steps.*

- 3. Assure consumer choice of providers and public and private plans**
 - *Addressed through establishment of exchange and creation of a self sustaining public option as well as repealing the anti-trust exemption for insurers.*
- 4. Simplify the system (insurance administration, etc.) so that it is user friendly (understandable and transparent to consumers.)**
 - *Creating level playing field in terms of underwriting and enactment of administrative simplification to reduce paperwork, standardize transactions and improve transparency seen as important step forward*
- 5. Control costs and improve quality of care by reforming the payment system so that it rewards results and not activity and holds providers accountable for outcomes not procedures.**
 - *Increased payments for primary care under Medicaid important step*
 - *Addressing of Medicare payment rates based on geography and geographic variations in health spending through IOM studies with provisions for adopting recommendations is needed for cost control and quality improvement in Medicare*
 - *Provisions for Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation creation and empowerment, creation of Accountable Care Organization program and Comparative Effectiveness Research Agency all needed to identify quality measures, provide the science to implement evidence based care and provide the incentives for the delivery system to implement those changes*
 - *Changes to Medicare Advantage plans and managed care organizations seen as supporting this principle*

Detailed information about HR 3962 can be found on WAHA's website at www.whatcomalliance.org/policy

For more information contact

Kerri Lenderman, Executive Director
360-788-6531
kslenderman@hinet.org

Sue Sharpe, Health Policy Chair
360-671-3349
suesharpe@stlukesfoundation.org