



**STATEMENT ABOUT AGREEMENT WITH WHITE HOUSE AND SENATE
FINANCE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH REFORM**

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America's hospitals have long been committed to expanding coverage to the millions of Americans without health insurance. Physicians, nurses and other caregivers know all too well what lack of coverage means for far too many people. They see it in America's emergency rooms every day. As a nation, we know we can and must do better. That's why we support today's agreement with Chairman Baucus and the Obama Administration to move comprehensive health reform forward.

Now for the first time, coverage for all is within our nation's reach as the agreement based upon the Finance Committee proposal will cover 95 percent of all Americans. As we take this historic step, we recognize that everyone must do their part if we are to succeed. This proposal calls on employers, individuals, unions, suppliers, insurers and other providers to do their part as well. Make no mistake that hospitals will do our part to get virtually every American covered. The reductions of \$155 billion over 10 years in the framework are substantial, are linked in part to increased coverage and cannot go any deeper without damaging hospitals' ability to care for their communities.

Today's package makes significant strides in reforming our health care delivery system. We are pleased to see restrictions on physician self-referral to hospitals in which they have an ownership interest, proposals to simplify administrative red tape and no cuts to funding that teaching hospitals rely upon to train the next generation of physicians. In addition, the disproportionate share programs (DSH) that help hospitals care for the uninsured and underinsured and support important community resources would not be reduced until 2015, and reductions would only occur if coverage expansions actually took place. Roughly 60 percent of the existing DSH payments would be preserved to support our nation's safety net.

The true test of any reform is whether it improves care for patients and helps make our nation healthier as well as ensure that hospitals, the backbone of community health care, are able to meet the challenges of caring for their communities. The public will hold any final package to that standard. We applaud the work of Senator Baucus in putting together this important framework and stand ready to work with the Senate, House and the Administration to enact comprehensive health reform that works for patients and families and the hospitals and health care professionals that serve them.

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