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Principles for Health Care Reform

December 2008

DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance applauds President Barack Obama and congressional leaders for recent statements prioritizing reform of the U.S. health care delivery system to expand access to coverage and improve health care quality. DMAA welcomes the recognition of care coordination, wellness and prevention as important tools in controlling the prevalence and costs associated with acute and chronic illnesses.

The time is now to change the current direction of health care. Medicare Trustees project that federal spending on Medicare and Medicaid, measured as a percentage of gross domestic product, will rise from the current 4 percent to 12 percent in 2050 and to almost 20 percent by 2080. The bulk of that projected increase arises from steadily growing health care costs per beneficiary. This trajectory is unsustainable and will impede efforts to expand coverage options for all consumers.

The Congressional Budget Office has examined academic research suggesting proposals to address the overuse, underuse and misuse of care can reduce costs by perhaps 30 percent, while improving quality. Potential cost reduction approaches include generating more information about the relative effectiveness of medical treatments and coordination of care, as well as enhancing the incentives for providers to supply, and consumers to demand, better care, rather than just more care. However, the fundamental way to address health care cost is through design and implementation of broad-scale reform to transform our health care system from one focused on reactionary care to one focused on preventive care and the promotion of health as a shared national resource. This will require a “systems-approach” to reform across all payers, providers, purchasers and consumers. Ultimately, payments, rewards and incentives must be aligned across all providers, purchasers and consumers toward a goal of improved health.

DMAA and its members are uniquely qualified to assist policymakers in the design and evaluation of population health management programs; consumer and caregiver engagement; design and implementation of coordinated and integrated care; consumer education and support; and evaluation of health improvement initiatives. These areas of expertise are built upon a foundation of evidenced-based medicine, advanced analytic methods, effective use of health information technologies and considerable research on communications and behavior change. DMAA members look forward to sharing this expertise with policymakers to achieve necessary health system reform.

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DMAA believes the goal of health care reform should be to improve the quality and efficiency of care for all consumers.

DMAA believes broad-scale health care reform should:

- Seek to improve the health of the entire population;
- Increase access to affordable health care coverage options;
- Center on the needs of consumers;
- Improve consumer health knowledge and confidence;
- Encourage engagement and accountability of patients, their families and caregivers;
- Reward value and quality across all payers and providers;
- Promote integrated, coordinated care;
- Increase the availability of primary and preventive care;
- Promote transparency of price and quality;
- Support providers who implement health information technology to improve safety and coordination;
- Implement a national health data repository;
- Include rigorous evaluation of clinical and administrative interventions, with feedback loops to continuously improve health care delivery; and
- Support the continued use of tax benefits to expand insurance coverage.

Moving the nation toward a more efficient health care system inevitably will be a process in which policy steps are tried, evaluated and possibly reconsidered. Beginning that arduous process now is essential to securing the nation's long-term economic and health care future.

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About DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance

DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance convenes all stakeholders providing services along the care continuum toward the goal of population health improvement. These care continuum services include strategies, such as health and wellness promotion, disease management, and care coordination. DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance promotes the role of population health improvement in raising the quality of care, improving health outcomes and reducing preventable health care costs for individuals with chronic conditions and those at risk of developing chronic conditions. DMAA activities in support of these efforts include advocacy, research and the promotion of best practices in care management.

DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance represents more than 200 corporate and individual stakeholders— including wellness, disease and care management organizations, pharmaceutical manufacturers and benefits managers, health information technology innovators, biotechnology innovators, employers, physicians, nurses and other health care professionals, and researchers and academicians. Visit DMAA online at www.dmaa.org.