

June 14, 2006

The Honorable Pete Sessions
U.S. House of Representatives
1514 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Sessions:

On behalf of our organizations, we are writing to express our support for price transparency. We have come together in the hopes of raising awareness about the need to expand consumer access to price information for hospital charges and to move the issue on the legislative agenda. It is vitally important to the future of our health care system.

Both the House leadership and Bush administration believe that price transparency is critical to helping people make the best health care decisions. In June, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) took the lead by posting pricing information for some government health programs, starting with Medicare.

Price transparency in health care is needed for the most vulnerable health consumers: uninsured patients. It will also undoubtedly help Health Savings Account (HSA) policyholders. For too long, medical service prices have been unavailable to many Americans. While a service's price should not be the only factor a patient takes into consideration when making a health care decision, it can be an extremely important one – and one that is currently missing from the decision-making process.

America is transitioning to a consumer driven health care system where price, quality and value matter. People want to know what something costs, especially if they are paying for it themselves or with funds from their HSA accounts. We support moving this debate forward in the legislative process. Clearly we should be able to agree on legislation that encourages hospital price transparency by offering hospitals incentives – not mandates – to provide a template for disseminating this vital information.

Signed,

Alliance for Affordable Services
Americans for Tax Reform
American Health Value
Association of American Physicians and Surgeons
Chesapeake Insurance Company
Communicating for Agriculture
Consumers for Health Care Choices
Council for Affordable Health Insurance
Medical Savings Insurance Company
MEGA Life and Health Insurance Company
Mid-West Insurance Company
National Association of the Self-Employed
National Taxpayers Union
US Health and Life Insurance Company