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CEOs FROM MULTIPLE HEALTH INDUSTRIES ANNOUNCE CONSENSUS PLAN TO REFORM U.S. HEALTH CARE

*Will Seek Working Partnership with New President, Congress
on Public-Private Effort to Expand Health Care Coverage & Revamp Health Care Payment
Systems to Emphasize Wellness, Evidence-Based Medicine*

CHICAGO, IL – A coalition of chief executives from many of the nation’s leading health care companies and organizations have joined together to announce an industry-wide health care reform proposal intended to ‘close the health care gap’ between the status quo and the ‘health care system all Americans deserve.’ The proposal was developed and endorsed by CEOs representing virtually every segment of the health care industry – including health plans, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, health industry distributors and others.

The health industry reform proposal, called *Closing the Gap: A Proposal to Develop Affordable, Quality Health Care to All Americans*, was unveiled at a Chicago press briefing by Denis Cortese, president and CEO, Mayo Clinic; John Hammergren, chairman and CEO, McKesson Corporation; Mark Neaman, president and CEO, Evanston Northwestern Healthcare; Colleen Conway-Welch, dean, Vanderbilt School of Nursing; Ronald Williams, chairman and CEO, Aetna; and Mary Greal, president, Healthcare Leadership Council.

In her remarks at the media briefing, Ms. Greal said this proposal reflects the health industry’s intent to work cooperatively with political leaders to make health care reform a reality.

“In 2009, it is our hope that we can work together to get this job done. Too many times, health reform has been derailed by political conflict, ideological gridlock, inflammatory rhetoric and demonizing opponents to make a point,” she said. “We are providing a blueprint for health care reform that provides appropriate roles for both the private and public sectors, and we believe it’s time to get the job done and do what’s right for patients and health care consumers.”

In their proposal, health industry executives have called for a number of approaches to improve both the accessibility and quality of U.S. health care. Among them:

- Fully funding public coverage programs, while allowing dollars from the Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Program to be used to fund subsidies to help workers unable to afford their share of employer-provided health coverage. This would be coupled with more effective public-private outreach toward the millions of Americans who do not know where to seek information about health coverage options.

- Eliminating tax-treatment disparities felt by people who purchase health insurance on the individual market because they are self-employed or work for employers who don't offer health coverage.
- Restructuring health care payment systems to encourage and reward positive outcomes and the use of evidence-based medicine, paying for greater value instead of simply volume of services.
- Speeding up the movement toward a nationwide health information network, with financing mechanisms for health care providers that do not have the capital for information systems improvements, and the creation of a national patient privacy standard to replace today's mosaic of state privacy laws.

Ms. Grealy said, in developing this proposal, industry executives were intent on not only addressing the accessibility of health care and reducing the number of uninsured, but equally focused on improving the quality of the U.S. health care system.

“People need access to care, but it is also imperative that patients receive care that produces the best outcomes,” she said. “As we get more people the health care coverage they need, we also need to take steps in a number of areas – from health information technology, to liability reform, to the way health care payments and incentives are structured – in order to bring greater coast-to-coast consistency to health care quality.”

Health industry leaders have scheduled meetings to discuss this proposal with leaders of key U.S. Senate and House committees, and will present it to the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, as well as congressional campaigns throughout the country.

The *Closing the Gap* proposal is available at www.hlc.org.

The Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) was founded in 1988 by chief executives of the nation's premier health care companies and organizations. At the HLC table, leaders from all sectors of for-profit and non-profit health care work together to advocate their shared vision of a system that offers accessible, innovative health care of the highest attainable quality for all Americans.