



*Promoting innovation,
competition, cost-
effectiveness and
quality*

The HLC is committed to advancing a market-based health care system that values innovation and provides affordable, high quality health care. As leaders of our nation's health care system, we share a vision of high-quality and innovative health care that is available to all.

Come join us as we meet with

**REPRESENTATIVE
JAMES WALSH (R-NY)
TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2008
3:00 p.m.
SYRACUSE, NY**

Please contact Tom Maher, HLC Regional Director,
at 603-431-2340 or thomas.maher2@verizon.net for more details
or to confirm your participation.

HLC regional directors and member companies, local business allies and community health advocates from local Healthcare Leadership Teams to express the consensus of the health care industry on key health issues. HLC regional directors and Teams conduct meetings with members of Congress to educate them on priority health care issues and legislation.

A Few Key Issues:

Access to Health Insurance Coverage for the Uninsured

Patient Safety and Quality

Confidentiality of Patient Medical Records

Medicare Modernization

Chronic Care Management and Wellness

Shortage of Qualified Medical Personnel

Medical Liability Reform



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As of March 14, 2008

Access to Health Insurance Coverage for the Uninsured:

Improving access to health insurance remains HLC's key priority. There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution for the uninsured. Just as the reasons that people are uninsured are numerous, so must be the solutions. HLC leads the *Health Access America* campaign to help uninsured Americans find and obtain health coverage. **HLC supports a three-pronged solution that includes subsidies for those who need them, improving public programs to cover as many people as possible, and making sure all Americans are aware of and understand the options available to them. Other changes to the health care system are needed in addition to financing changes in order to address affordability and quality for everyone.**

Patient Safety and Quality:

HLC supports care coordination and the integration of technology to bring the right care to the right patient every time. HLC supports financial incentives and targeted funding to encourage widespread adoption of health information technology and value-based purchasing initiatives to improve patient safety and quality of care. **HLC supports measures that will encourage the development of a nationwide, interoperable health information network. Essential steps include the creation of national patient privacy standards and financing mechanisms to assist health care providers in acquiring new IT infrastructures.** Value-based purchasing (VBP), payment for health care services based on getting the highest level of quality at the best cost, is another important tool for improving health quality. **Value-based purchasing programs should encourage a culture of continuous quality improvement and pay for value.** Financial incentives should reward those who demonstrate improvement or exceed benchmarks, as well as sustain quality.

Confidentiality of Patient Medical Records:

Doctors, hospitals, pharmacists, health plans and other providers strongly support the privacy of patients' medical information. At the same time, high quality patient care depends on the flow of information. With the modifications made to the HIPAA Privacy Regulation in August 2002, these goals have largely been met. **HLC applauds Congress for implementing patient privacy standards and urges that Congress take no action on privacy legislation which could impede patient care or the discovery of cures or treatments. Also, Congress should consider federal preemption in order to reduce costly and burdensome dual compliance requirements** with state and federal laws and remove barriers to the implementation of multi-state health information networks.

Medicare Modernization:

HLC actively supports legislation that moves Medicare closer to becoming a health care delivery model that can increase health care quality while controlling long-term costs. The Medicare prescription drug benefit represents one step in this direction. In 2003, HLC launched the *Medicare Today* initiative to ensure that beneficiaries and their families understood the new benefits and helped people take advantage of the options available to them. HLC continues, in particular, to highlight Medicare's new preventive benefits and subsidies for low-income beneficiaries to provide even greater access to prescription medicines. **The Medicare program needs to be modernized in order to encourage care coordination, and access to the most effective treatments and technologies. Adequate provider payments are critical and should be carefully considered, especially under the pressure of a "pay go" environment.** **be carefully considered, especially under the pressure of a "pay go" environment.**

Chronic Care Management and Wellness:

Estimates suggest that health care spending on chronic disease accounts for up to 75 percent of health spending. The private sector and some state Medicaid programs are embracing chronic care management and wellness. **Congress should support efforts to reward wellness and chronic care management instead of focusing on paying for volume and sick care.**

Shortage of Qualified Medical Personnel:

Shortages of qualified nurses, pharmacists, and other medical personnel are severely impacting hospitals, pharmacies and other health care providers. Congress must work with health care providers to address this nationwide shortage globally so that patient care is not adversely impacted. **Congress must recognize that other issues, like improved information technology and reduction of burdensome regulations, are inextricably linked to solving the workforce shortage problem. We urge members of Congress to join the STEM Education Caucus which supports science and math education efforts.**

Medical Liability Reform:

One of the founding principles of HLC is that patients should have access to high quality health care. Skyrocketing liability costs for the health care system are having an adverse impact on both access and quality. Patients are increasingly paying for excessive litigation through diminished numbers of physicians, hospital services, trauma centers, and other facilities as a result of the crisis. Litigation also threatens the development of new drug therapies and medical technologies. **Congress should work to find bipartisan solutions that address medical errors without negatively impacting patients' access to care, as the current system does.**