



October 19, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander:

As the Committee prepares to hold a hearing on how healthy choices can improve outcomes and reduce costs, the Healthcare Leadership Council (HLC) welcomes the opportunity to share our thoughts with you.

HLC is a coalition of chief executives from all disciplines within American healthcare. It is the exclusive forum for the nation's healthcare leaders to jointly develop policies, plans, and programs to achieve their vision of a 21st century healthcare system that makes affordable, high-quality care accessible to all Americans. Members of HLC – hospitals, academic health centers, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, laboratories, biotech firms, health product distributors, pharmacies, post-acute care providers, and information technology companies – advocate for measures to increase the quality and efficiency of healthcare.

Like the Committee, HLC believes that chronic disease prevention and management are essential components of healthcare. It is estimated that in 2030, the number of people with 3 or more chronic diseases will reach 83.4 million. The medical and productivity cost per person of treating these diseases in that year will be \$8,600.¹ Many of these diseases are caused by modifiable health risk behaviors such as lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use. To avoid these risks, Americans need access to comprehensive and evidence-based wellness practices that educate them on how to make healthy choices. HLC helps promote these programs through its *Wellness Frontiers Award*, which recognizes best practices and draws attention to wellness initiatives that demonstrate excellence and quality. The award-winning programs are cost-effective, evidence-based, replicable, and produce measurable results.

HLC's member companies are at the forefront of developing and implementing programs that give employees and communities access to the tools, resources, and

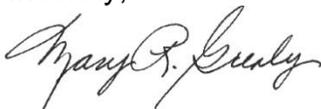
¹ Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, "What is the Impact of Chronic Disease on America?"
http://www.fightchronicdisease.org/sites/default/files/pfcd_blocks/PFCD_US.FactSheet_FINAL1%20%282%29.pdf

incentives needed to reduce, delay, or eliminate the impact of chronic disease. Today's testimony by Dr. Michael Roizen, representing HLC member Cleveland Clinic, highlights the Clinic's wellness program. A 2012 survey of our members found that 91% of them have instituted similar changes to promote wellness. More information on these programs can be found in HLC's compendium, "The Future is Here: Transforming American Healthcare Through Private Sector Innovation."² HLC also supported the Affordable Care Act's bipartisan provision that increased the ability of employers to vary premiums up to 50% based on participation in a wellness program. We did not agree with the recent decision in the *AARP v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)* case, and urge the Committee to consider legislation that would clarify that workplace wellness programs do not violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act (GINA).

Additionally, HLC is a strong proponent of the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), which for people with prediabetes has been shown to reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 58% through the use of diet, exercise, and behavior modification counseling. We are pleased that this program will be expanded to Medicare in 2018, which will help ensure that our country's seniors are able to make informed healthy choices to prevent the onset of diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 23 million people age 65 or older have prediabetes,³ and this number will only increase as the Baby Boomer population ages. The DPP's expansion to Medicare will improve outcomes for this population and reduce Medicare costs. We encourage the Committee to consider the DPP as a model for other chronic diseases.

Thank you again for your commitment to improving health and reducing costs by incentivizing healthy choices. HLC looks forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Debbie Witchev at (202) 449-3435.

Sincerely,



Mary R. Grealy
President

² Healthcare Leadership Council, "The Future is Here: Transforming American Healthcare Through Private Sector Innovation." <https://www.hlc.org/app/uploads/2014/01/compendium.pdf>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2017: Estimates of Diabetes and Its Burden in the United States." <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf>