

“Consumer choice creates incentives at all levels and motivates the entire system to provide better care for less money. Improvements will come as providers see how their practice compares to others.”

— HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt

Letter to America’s Business Leaders From HHS Secretary Michael O. Leavitt

Dear CEO:

I am writing to invite you to play a leadership role in the movement toward transparency and value-driven health care purchasing. We all celebrate the advances in medicine that help us live longer and healthier lives. At the same time, we also know the challenges that our health care sector faces and realize that our health care dollars could be spent more effectively.

In August of this year, President Bush signed an Executive Order committing Federal health programs to provide meaningful, consistent information on both the quality and price of health care services. Under this initiative, participants in Federal health programs will be able to access quality and price information about the health care they receive. By making this information available, all stakeholders in the health care system will have better tools and incentives to improve care and maximize the value of their health care purchases.

I am asking you to support the four “cornerstone” actions of the recent Executive Order—interoperable health IT; transparency of quality; transparency of price; and incentives for high-value health care, thus building upon the good work already underway by the private sector and by broad-based, public-private collaborations. The Federal government and America’s employers, working with health insurance plans and health care providers can help bring about uniform, consensus-based approaches for measuring the quality and cost or price of care and provide this information to consumers to help them make informed and confident health care choices. This information is critical to the growing number of Americans who are enrolling in consumer-directed health plans and is essential for improving patient care and enhancing the effectiveness of our health care system.

I encourage you to support the transformation of our health care system through the four cornerstones of value-driven health care by signing the Purchaser Statement of Support. This Statement of Support and other useful information can be found in this packet or online at: www.hhs.gov/transparency. If you have further questions, please contact HHS Value-driven Health Care at (202) 205-5552 or valuedriven@hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

Michael O. Leavitt, *Secretary*
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Four Cornerstones for Improving Health Care Value

1. Quality Transparency
2. Price Transparency
3. Interoperable Information Systems
4. Incentives that Recognize and Reward Value

BHC Supports the Four Cornerstones

The BHC appreciates Secretary Leavitt’s focus on better health care value and pledges to support broader adoption of the four cornerstones of value-driven health care in St. Louis.

1. Quality Transparency

- BHC will work to achieve broader quality measurement and public reporting in the St. Louis region.
- BHC will encourage the use of national consensus-based measures and metrics.
- BHC will act to increase awareness and use of the information by consumers, physicians, nurses and other health care professionals.

2. Price Transparency

- BHC will work to accompany quality measures with cost comparisons so that consumers can focus on value.

3. Interoperable Information (IT) Systems

- BHC will work to hasten the adoption of interoperable health information systems across the region.
- BHC will continue its requests of St. Louis hospitals and other health care providers to publicly report their progress toward IT implementations so that St. Louis citizens can utilize this information in seeking optimal care.

4. Positive Incentives

- BHC will work to develop and promote approaches that recognize and encourage high quality, cost effective health care. ■