



June 27, 2011

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
512 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Coburn
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Former President Jimmy Carter

Chairman

John H. McArthur

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Executive Vice President, Policy and
Strategy
AARP

John Seffrin
CEO
American Cancer Society

John Sweeney
President
AFL-CIO

John Wilson
Executive Director
NEA

Dear Senator Carper and Senator Coburn,

The National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC) wishes to applaud your bipartisan effort to combat fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid in order to support the long term sustainability of these important programs. The Medicare and Medicaid Fighting Fraud and Abuse to Save Taxpayer Dollars Act of 2011 (FAST Act) not only will improve the health programs that serve the most vulnerable populations, but also will provide some of the data critical to improving the nation's health system.

The National Coalition on Health Care (NCHC) is America's oldest, most diverse, and broadest based group working to achieve comprehensive health system reform. With over 80 participating organizations, representing medical societies, business, unions, health care providers, associations of religious congregations, pension and health funds, insurers, and groups representing consumers, patients, women, minorities, and persons with disabilities, NCHC is dedicated to creating a high value health system that is sustainable, affordable and fair.

The reduction of fraud is a commonsense way to eliminate some of the estimated \$800 billion wasted by America's health system each year. Fraud and abuse contributes tens of billions of dollars every year to the out of control health system costs identified by CBO as a major threats to country's long term fiscal outlook and fraud and abuse contribute tens of billions of dollars to that bill every year. An investment in reducing fraud, waste and abuse will reap significant benefits - for every \$1 spent on health care oversight, the government sees a return of \$17.

The FAST Act would replace a confusing array of provider numbers with a single provider identification code, and improve data sharing among the states and federal government and potentially streamline the data collection process. These steps, together with greater standardization of data reporting will make it much easier to crack down on fraud abuse in federal programs.

At the same time, the integrated and streamlined data could also lay the foundation for other significant improvements to America's health system. Today, development of health policies that will rein in costs and improve value is hindered by the lack of comprehensive, comparable data on health costs and spending. The FAST Act represents the first of many steps toward creating a thorough picture of the American health system. The same kind of bipartisan, commonsense effort that produced the FAST Act could and should be dedicated to the broad, standardized collection of health cost, spending and quality data throughout the health system. That information could then be used to support the development of system-wide cost containment policies.

Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and all American taxpayers deserve no less than high quality, affordable health care. The FAST Act of 2011 takes an important step in this direction. We look forward to continuing to work with you to encourage value and eliminate waste in the health system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph G. Neas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "N".

Ralph G. Neas
President and CEO