

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
129 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative Hensarling and Senator Murray:

The Tennessee delegation in the House of Representatives strongly supports your efforts in leading the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. Like you, we are committed to a strong and growing economy, job creation and fiscal responsibility. For this reason, we respectfully request that you give full consideration to the potential results of further reductions to healthcare providers on our nation's economy and employment.

Cognizant of Tennessee's distinguished health care heritage and our task to ensure patients have access to quality care, we understand that the Joint Select Committee will examine several of the proposals introduced by previous deficit reduction efforts. The impact from hospitals and various providers on the workforce in our state is substantial, employing nearly 290,000 workers and contributing more than \$22.9 billion to the economy.

We wholly support efforts to address our nation's long-term fiscal challenges. Absent fundamental reform, cutting hospitals above what would be achieved through sequestration leaves many in a precarious financial position, and we hope the Joint Select Committee considers what could be a significant impact on Medicare beneficiaries if reductions occur beyond this level. Foremost, we are concerned about the repercussions that would be felt by rural and small providers in communities where facilities are prone to reliance on federal payment status programs.

Additionally, while we recognize that reductions in funding for graduate medical education (GME) and indirect medical education (IME) are part of the discussion, we ask that you carefully consider the impact such cuts. GME is essential in educating the next generation of healthcare providers.

Even as the economy struggles, hospitals continue to serve as a safety net, bearing the escalating cost of uncompensated care, as well as rising bad debt. Hospitals have a requirement unique to any industry in America under the EMTALA law to provide emergency care to anyone who shows up, regardless of ability to pay. These challenges must be addressed through revising reimbursement for hospitals and health care providers in a manner that guarantees care for those most in need and sufficient payment for facilities providing the service.

As members of a state that is home to a sector that continues to add jobs and provide medical care to Americans from all walks of life, we appreciate the committee's attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to put America back on sound fiscal ground and on a path to robust economic growth.

Sincerely,



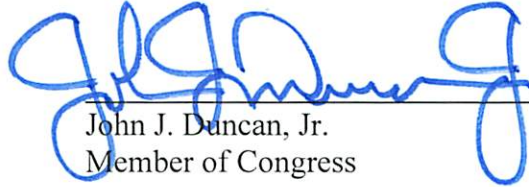
David P. Roe
Member of Congress



Diane Black
Member of Congress



Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress



John J. Duncan, Jr.
Member of Congress



Scott DesJarlais
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable John Boehner
The Honorable Eric Cantor
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Xavier Becerra
The Honorable Dave Camp
The Honorable Jim Clyburn
The Honorable John Kerry
The Honorable Jon Kyl
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Pat Toomey
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen