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SGR and Payment Reform Package Earns Bipartisan Support in the House

Statement by John Rother, CEO of the National Coalition on Health Care, regarding bipartisan discussion draft released by the House Energy and Commerce Committee

“Republicans and Democrats have finally crafted a major health care bill they can both support- and with health care costs continuing to grow, it is about time.

“This discussion draft once and for all would end the threat of deep cuts to physician payment that could disrupt access for the 47 million seniors and disabled Americans on Medicare. But as importantly, it could begin to hold down the cost of health care - by transforming how physicians and other health professionals are compensated. Instead of rewarding the number and complexity of medical tests and procedures, payment updates would depend on the quality of care and the health outcomes of their patients. To achieve those aims, physicians could opt to pursue innovative alternative payment models, such as accountable care or medical homes.

“Securing bipartisan support for a bill this ambitious is an achievement in itself, but more has to be done to perfect the legislation and move toward enactment. The Energy and Commerce Committee will consider the bill next week. Then the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee must find ways to improve it, and Congress must find a way to pay for and pass the legislation – without shattering the bipartisan support it enjoys or shifting costs in ways make health care less affordable. The National Coalition on Health Care will work to ensure they do just that.

“For now, though, the bill’s authors, Representatives Burgess, Dingell, Pallone, Pitts, Upton, and Waxman, should be commended for exemplifying bipartisan cooperation and leadership. On this issue at least, let’s hope their colleagues in the House and Senate can live up to their example.

“Paying for value, not volume, is vital to the sustainability of our health system, and an SGR bill could be the one viable legislative vehicle this Congress for advancing that important aim.”

To learn more about NCHC’s recommendations for reforming reimbursement and the broader health system, read its [Plan for Health and Fiscal Policy](#).

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The [National Coalition on Health Care](#) (NCHC), the oldest and most diverse group working to achieve comprehensive health system reform, is a 501(c)(3) organization representing more than 80 participating organizations, including medical societies, businesses, unions, health care providers, faith-based associations, pension and health funds, insurers and groups representing consumers, patients women, minorities and persons with disabilities. Member organizations collectively represent – as employees, members, or congregants – over 100 million Americans.

Some members of the National Coalition Health Care do not, or cannot, take positions either on specific legislation, strategies or on any policies outside their respective mission areas. However, all that can, do endorse broad policy positions in support of comprehensive health system change.