



News Release
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**Top Purchasers, Providers and Consumers
Urge Congress to Reject Distortions and Quickly Confirm
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Nominee Donald Berwick**

90 Organizations Say Berwick Rejects Rationing, Supports Better Care

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In an unprecedented and strongly worded letter, some 90 of the nation’s top consumer, purchaser and provider groups have issued a stirring defense of Dr. Donald Berwick, President Obama’s nominee to serve as administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Dr. Berwick has been targeted by opponents of health reform, who have misrepresented his work and distorted his positions.

“Donald Berwick is one of the nation’s leading experts on our health care system, and he will be a dedicated and effective public servant who works tirelessly to improve care for those who need it most,” said Debra L. Ness, president of the National Partnership for Women & Families, which leads the *Campaign for Better Care* with Community Catalyst and the National Health Law Program. “It is truly shameful that Dr. Berwick has been the victim of such ugly and baseless attacks, and the target of false charges about rationing. With this letter, those who provide, purchase and receive care are coming together to say that enough is enough, and to urge Congress to reject the distortions and confirm Dr. Berwick.”

The *Campaign for Better Care* organized the letter in support of Berwick’s nomination. It was signed by: diverse consumer groups including the AFL-CIO, SEIU, Center for Medicare Advocacy, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Alzheimer’s Association and American Association of People with Disabilities; provider groups including the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Nursing, American College of Cardiology, American Geriatrics Society, American Society of Consultant Pharmacists; and purchasers including National Business Coalition on Health, Buyers Health Care Action Group, St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition and Wal-mart Stores Inc.

“Donald Berwick is a visionary leader with a deep commitment to improving our health care system and vast knowledge about how to implement reforms in ways that will deliver on the change we need,” said David Lansky, CEO of the Pacific Business Group on Health. “He is committed to linking payment to improvements in quality, which will make patients safer and our health care system more efficient. The distortions of his record have been deeply disturbing.”

”Dr. Berwick’s steadfast pursuit of patient-centered care, patient safety, quality improvement, and care coordination in health care makes him an excellent choice for this critical position,” says J. Fred Ralston, Jr., MD, FACP, president of the American College of Physicians.

The letter to Congress concludes: “Dr. Berwick [is] exactly the right person to lead CMS at this critical time. We are not alone in our assessment. Health care leaders from across the political spectrum agree. Dr. Berwick’s nomination has been hailed by physician and hospital leaders, patient advocates, and a wide range of thought leaders. As former CMS Administrator under President George W. Bush, Thomas Scully, has said, ‘You’re not going to do any better.’ Dr. Berwick is the right leader, at the right time, to make health care reform work for patients and their families. The time for distractions and misleading rhetoric has passed. We urge you to confirm Dr. Berwick.”

The full letter, with all signers, is available online at:
www.CampaignForBetterCare.org/Berwick.

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The *Campaign for Better Care* is a multi-year initiative focused on improving health care quality, coordination and communication for older patients with multiple health problems and their family caregivers. It is building a movement of and for older adults and individuals with multiple chronic conditions, who are counting on health reform to provide the patient-centered, comprehensive and coordinated care they need. The *Campaign* is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies. Learn more at www.CampaignForBetterCare.org.