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May 20, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor and  
Pensions Committee  
United States Senate  
428 Senate Dirksen Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harkin:

On behalf of our more than 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and our 40,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association strongly supports President Obama's nomination of Donald Berwick, M.D., as administrator for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Dr. Berwick is a true leader in health care quality improvement and brings of a wealth of knowledge and experience to CMS. His work at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) has engaged hospitals, doctors, nurses and other health care providers in the continuous quest to provide better, safer care. This includes dramatic advances in quality improvement, patient safety and end-of-life care through IHI's collaboratives, breakthrough series and other activities. In addition, he has done tremendous work to reduce health care associated infections and improve care coordination. Since 1991, Dr. Berwick and the experts at IHI have worked tirelessly with hospitals and health systems in the U.S. and abroad to bring about positive change in health care delivery for patients and communities.

Dr. Berwick also is a trusted and respected voice among hospitals, as well as within the larger health care community. His knowledge of our health care delivery system, its strengths and weaknesses make him uniquely suited to implement provisions in the recently enacted health care reform law.



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America's hospitals look forward to working with Dr. Berwick and tapping his experience as a practicing physician, an educator, a consultant and a health care consumer in order to find new ways to continue to improve care for the patients and communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Rich Umbdenstock  
President and CEO

Cc: Senator Michael B. Enzi, Ranking Member