

## PHYSICIAN HOSPITALS OF AMERICA (PHA): WE ACCEPT SENATOR BAUCUS' INVITATION TO BEGIN "WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH ALL" ON BEHALF OF HEALTH CARE REFORM.

(November 13, 2008) – Physician Hospitals of America (PHA), representing the country's physician owned hospitals, congratulates Senator Max Baucus on the release of "Call to Action-- Health Reform 2009". The document identifies many of the key issues facing the nation's health system and offers serious proposals to address them. This is an important contribution to the much-needed national dialogue with Congress, the new President and all Americans on the future of health care in this nation.

However, PHA is disappointed that Senator Baucus again challenges physician control and ownership of hospitals, since ensuring that America's hospitals are exclusively operated and owned by bureaucrats and corporate executives will not cover the uninsured, improve the quality of medical services, improve access, promote collaboration or increase accountability.

### **HOSPITAL REFORM LEADERS**

While the debate over health care has been continuing, PHA member hospitals have been leading the real-world reform of America's hospitals and are an important part of the communities they serve. In fact, fully 10 of the 30 hospitals named Monday (11/17/08) as Best Community Hospitals for Cardiovascular Care, are owned and operated by physicians, not corporate executives and bureaucrats with no medical training. (Source: Thomson Reuter - [www.thomsonreuters.com](http://www.thomsonreuters.com))

PHA and its member hospitals and physicians who have devoted their lives to patient care, share Senator Baucus' health care reform goals. PHA hospitals have invaluable first-hand knowledge and experience in hospital reform that can and should be used to help improve all hospitals.

But despite the record of achievement by physician hospitals, the evidence is clear that physician control and ownership of hospitals is neither a cause of, or a solution to, the healthcare challenges we all face.

## **PATIENTS REPORT BETTER CARE**

In addition to independent research and studies, mandated federal quality initiatives (HCAHPS) patients clearly state that the care they receive at physician hospitals is better – much better.

On every measure, from how carefully nurses and doctors listen to patients, to how well their pain is controlled, patients told CMS researchers that physician hospitals offered a better quality of care.

## **INTEGRAL PART OF LOCAL ECONOMIES**

Not only do physician hospitals deliver high quality medical care to the people they serve, they also provide much needed jobs, pay taxes and generate significant economic activity for local businesses. In a CMS study from 2005, it was determined that considering both uncompensated care and tax payments, physician hospitals returned a net community benefit almost eight times higher than non-profit hospitals, averaging 7.23% in net benefit as compared to .87% for non-profit hospitals. *Study of Physician Owned Hospitals Required in Section 506 (c)(3) of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, by Michael O. Leavitt, Sect. of HHS, pg. 58.*

As demonstrated by the above facts, true healthcare reform is already underway through the engagement of physician hospitals that have been reforming healthcare, one hospital at a time.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Rather than continuing the pointless legislative battles of the last several years, PHA would like to accept the Senator's invitation to begin "working collaboratively with all" as he seeks "partners with 'can do' spirits and open minds."

As the Senator points out, there are no quick answers to fixing the problems in our healthcare system, but the time has come to take the first step. The physicians, nurses and other staff who work at PHA member hospitals, and the patients who are gladly served by these physician hospitals, are prepared to join him in this effort.

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*Physician Hospitals of America (PHA) is the national professional association representing more than 200 of America's finest physician owned and operated hospitals. PHA is online at [www.physicianhospitals.org](http://www.physicianhospitals.org)*