

16 March 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Your outstanding nominee to lead CMS, Dr. Donald Berwick, is trapped in the partisan battle over health reform. Misleading statements and untruths about his remarkable record have replaced a legitimate exploration of differences that can emerge during an open public hearing. We deplore this mistreatment of such a highly qualified individual who has already proven his leadership skills and vision in the short time he has served as the CMS Administrator. We are troubled that those 42 senators who seek to block his nomination would deny him a voice through the formal hearings process.

We urge you to ask Chairmen Baucus and Harkin to schedule hearings in the Senate committees to consider Dr. Berwick's appointment. We realize that the opposing Senators may have no interest in considering Dr. Berwick on his merits. If that is the case, open hearings will let the opponents define themselves and their motives.

As President, you often describe the "civil discourse" and "collective reason" required to resolve the daunting issues we face as a Nation. We agree. No one is as well prepared as Dr. Berwick to help you and the Nation move forward to make health care safer, more effective, more responsive, and more efficient for us all. It is critically important that he have the opportunity to defend his record and share his views in full view of the public.

If ever there were a time for all of us working together to step forward on the health care debate, it is now.

Respectfully,

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cc: Chief of Staff, William Daley
Senator Baucus
Senator Harkin