

An Open Letter to all Minnesotans from State Health Care Leaders

Written by

Thursday, 21 June 2012 15:07

In a matter of days, there will be a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that will have significant ramifications for health care in the United States and Minnesota. The Supreme Court will issue its ruling on the Affordable Care Act, President Obama's health care reform law. While the decision will likely generate further national debate, it's important to acknowledge that the decision won't change some basic facts about health care in Minnesota.

Minnesota has been a pioneer in health care for more than a century and, regardless of the Court's decision, we will continue to be a national leader. We have taken a local, commonsense approach to improving the health of our communities, lowering cost through high quality care and providing affordable coverage in our state. No matter what the Court decides, Minnesotans already know how to collaborate to improve our health care system and move forward together, in the best interest of our state.

While Minnesota's health care system does better overall compared to the rest of the country, we all still struggle with unsustainable health care costs and lack of access to care. More than 14 percent of our state economy is consumed by health care costs and even with this spending, nearly 490,000 Minnesotans are uninsured. The fear of unaffordable health care holds back entrepreneurs who want to set out on their own and keeps small businesses from new hiring or raising wages. If we don't take action to address these concerns, the problems will only grow as Minnesota's demographics change and our population ages.

Many principles of the Affordable Care Act have broad-based support throughout our state and should form the basis for continued health reform in Minnesota. These include:

- All Minnesotans should have access to high quality and affordable health care.
- Preventive care, like mammograms, should be a central part of our health care system and be available without financial barriers.
- Smart investments in community health initiatives can improve public health and reduce health care costs.

These changes, and Minnesota's ongoing health reforms, are helping Minnesotans get the care they need today. We should work to find ways to continue these solutions, while also developing new ideas within our state, regardless of the Supreme Court's ruling.

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Minnesota's future health care system must be built upon our strong tradition of health care innovation and our pioneering spirit. Even with differing perspectives on specific health care issues, we can all agree that Minnesota needs to stay on the path of healthier communities, better health care value, and better access for all Minnesotans. After the Supreme Court rules, Minnesota's health care leaders will come together to discuss next steps and to listen to your ideas for how we should move forward.

As leaders in our state, we stand committed to continuing the path of health reform in Minnesota.

Signed by 23 civic and political leaders.

Representative Jim Davnie

Senator Scott Dibble

Representative Alice Hausman

Senator Jeff Hayden

Senator Linda Higgins

Representative Larry Hosch

Representative Tom Huntley

Representative Diane Loeffler

Representative Tina Liebling

Senator Tony Lourey

Senator Mary Jo Maguire

Representative Erin Murphy

Representative Michael Nelson

Representative John Persell

Senator Patricia Torres Ray

Senator Kathy Sheran