



of Tennessee

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## **Bipartisan Efforts Needed for Affordable, Sustainable Reform**

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee is strongly committed to advancing bipartisan health care reforms that directly address the goals of:

- Achieving universal coverage;
- Reducing the future growth rate of health care costs;
- Fostering a focus on prevention, and;
- Keeping Americans healthy.

We have endorsed comprehensive proposals to significantly restructure our health care system. These proposals ensure that no one falls through the cracks, while also promoting quality improvements and providing greater value for the dollars our nation spends on health care.

### Achieving universal coverage

We have backed major insurance market reforms designed to provide peace of mind to all Americans. New market rules and consumer protections would guarantee coverage for pre-existing conditions, stop setting rates based on health status or gender, and ensure continuity of care and portability of coverage. Combined with a requirement for individuals to have insurance – and subsidies for those who need help to afford coverage – these reforms will go a long way toward meeting the goal of universal coverage.

### Reducing the future growth rate of health care costs

Today's payment system rewards providers for quantity of care rather than quality of care. We need to reform our payment system in both public and private plans to align provider payments with achieving high quality outcomes for patients. These changes should help create organized systems of care, leveraging health information technology, evidence-based decision support, and comprehensive team-based care coordination. We believe the patient-centered medical home, which integrates and closely coordinates care among providers and health plans, can ensure focus on all aspects of a patient's health and care delivery needs while also reducing costs.

### Focus on prevention and keeping Americans healthy

Our health care delivery system is oriented towards "sick care" and people are not engaged in managing their own health. We need reforms that encourage

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and reward people for engaging in health risk assessments and personalized plans for fitness, weight management, smoking cessation and other lifestyle changes. We also must reduce barriers to care through benefit plans that encourage preventive care and patient compliance with evidence-based standards of care. These are crucial steps in preventing or managing disease.

We also believe the competitive marketplace will foster the kind of innovation that can deliver value without creating a government run plan that would disrupt the quality coverage Americans now have and want to keep. We are concerned that some legislative proposals rely on slashing payments for Medicare and Medicaid. These proposals do so through price controls that simply lock in traditional fee-for-service payments and undermine efforts to transition to a high quality health care delivery system. Congress and all Americans must carefully consider the unintended consequences of these proposals.

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee has provided leadership in driving the transformation needed to remake our health care system. We remain committed to advancing solutions to ensure that all Americans have access to high quality health care. We stand ready to work with all stakeholders to achieve the goal of affordable, sustainable health care reform.

**Vicky Gregg is President & CEO of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, the state's largest health plan.**