



August 1, 2021

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member, House Energy and
Commerce, Health Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Devin Nunes
Ranking Member, Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
1013 Longworth Building House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Dear Colleague on the Healthy Future Task Force

Dear Chair Brett Guthrie and Devin Nunes,

As you consider the work of the Healthy Future Task Force, we welcome the opportunity to share our views about how to improve the affordability and quality of health care in this country. We look forward to working with you to transform our health care system so that it supports and encourages physicians to continue to serve as the foundation of the American health care system.

The Partnership to Empower Physician-Led Care (PEPC) is a membership organization dedicated to supporting value-based care to reduce costs, improve quality, empower patients and physicians, and increase access to care for millions of Americans through a competitive health care provider market. We believe that it is impossible to achieve truly value-based care without a robust independent practice community. Our members include Aledade, American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), California Medical Association, Florida Medical Association, and Medical Group Management Association (MGMA). We also have individual and small medical group supporters across the country, many of whom are independent physicians or practices and wish to remain so.

We believe that physicians – especially independent physician practices– are the linchpin of our nation’s health care system. They have repeatedly demonstrated their superior ability to generate positive results in value-based care arrangements, both in improved health outcomes and reduced costs. In our vision of the future, this important piece of the health care system not only survives, but thrives as a result of policies that place independent physicians on a level playing field with other providers and opportunities to test new models with components that reflect their unique circumstances.

We strongly urge Congress to adopt policies that foster a competitive health care provider market.

In recent years, there has been a historic pendulum swing between employed physicians and private practice. At the time the survey was fielded in September-October 2020, the American Medical Association’s (AMA’s) 2020 [Physician Practice Benchmark Survey](#) found that 49.1 percent of physicians worked in physician-owned practices, 38 percent were practice owners, 8.2 percent were employed by physician-owned practices, and 2.5 percent were independent contractors working for physician-owned practices.

An analysis commissioned by the [Physicians Advocacy Institute](#) showed an even steeper move to hospital employment when it looked at data from the two-year period of January 1, 2019 to January 1, 2021. As of January 2021, approximately 70 percent of physicians were employed by hospitals or corporations. Over the previous two years, 48,400 physicians left independent practice and became employees. Nearly half that movement occurred after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



We believe that the primary care physician-patient relationship is most powerful when there is patient choice and provider competition within local markets. We support legislative and regulatory action that creates parity across practice settings; aligns incentives to enable a range of providers to move toward value-based care; and prohibits anti-competitive behavior such as information blocking.

We look forward to working with you on shared policy priorities, including prioritizing and building upon the success of physician-led alternative payment models in both Medicare and other markets, promoting competition in the provider market, and supporting patient-directed care through models that encourage patients to participate in their own health care decision-making and to be rewarded for doing so.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if the Partnership to Empower Physician-Led Care can be a resource to you. I can be reached at kristen@physiciansforvalue.org.

Sincerely,

Kristen McGovern
Executive Director