



November 14, 2023

The Honorable Ron Wyden

Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo

Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo,

On behalf of everyday people across the country navigating the current health care affordability crisis, United States of Care (USofCare) sends our deepest appreciation for your commitment to advance site-neutral payment reforms in upcoming Finance Committee work.¹

USofCare listens² firsthand to everyday people across the country who are eager for relief from high health care prices. Central to our core mission as an advocacy organization is pushing for reforms aligning with people's needs and desires for the U.S. health care system. We know the status quo isn't working for people, especially when considering that:

- ★ **Four in ten adults report that they or a family member put off or postponed needed health care due to cost.**³
- ★ **Over 100 million Americans are currently experiencing medical debt.**⁴
- ★ **People face higher insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs (including facility fees) when navigating health care needs in highly concentrated hospital markets, yet their care is not associated with an increased quality for patients.**⁵
- ★ **Patients face a 14% average post-acquisition price increase for their health care when their doctors are acquired by a hospital.**⁶

¹ United States Senate, Committee on Finance, Executive Session: Open Executive Session to consider an original bill entitled the Better Mental Health Care, Lower-Cost Drugs, and Extenders Act, November 8, 2023. [Link](#).

² United States of Care, Brief: Deep Listening and Public Opinion Research, April 26, 2022. [Link](#).

³ Montero, Alex et al., Americans' Challenges with Health Care Costs, Kaiser Family Foundation, July 14, 2022. [Link](#).

⁴ Levey, Naomi. 100 Million People in America are Saddled with Health Care Debt, Kaiser Health News, June 16, 2022. [Link](#).

⁵ Schwartz, Karyn et al., "What We Know About Provider Consolidation." KFF, September 2, 2020. [Link](#).

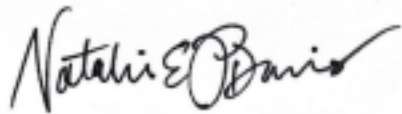
⁶ Capps, Cory et al., The effect of hospital acquisitions of physician practices on prices and spending, Journal of Health Economics, Volume 59, 2018, Pages 139-152, ISSN 0167-6296. [Link](#).

- ★ Approximately **4 in 5 U.S. voters across party lines say that hospital prices are unreasonable**, and **89% of U.S. voters think that it is important for Congress to take action** to address this issue.⁷

Enacting fair hospital billing through site-neutral payments is a crucial step to address the affordability crisis. Ensuring that people can access affordable, appropriately-priced, high-quality health care when they need it is the kind of reform people want. USofCare works with state advocates across the country to pass fair hospital billing reform legislation, and we can attest that the hospital pricing affordability crisis is a pressing issue for states that also needs urgent federal action. **Given the myriad of evidence underscoring the need for reform, we were delighted to hear of your shared commitment to these ideals in response to Hassan Amendment #2 in last week's Executive Session.**⁸

As the Committee pursues upcoming work on these issues, USofCare stands ready to serve as a resource to understanding people's perceptions and attitudes toward site-neutral payments and facility fees, as well as the significant momentum garnered in states that have already passed these bipartisan reforms.⁹ Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to advancing site-neutral payments. Please reach out to Lisa Hunter, Senior Director of Policy and External Affairs, at LHunter@usofcare.org, as questions or thoughts emerge.

Sincerely,



Natalie Davis
Co-Founder & CEO
United States of Care

⁷ Arnold Ventures, “New Poll: Majority of Voters Support Aggressive Congressional Action to Lower Hospital Prices.” March 23, 2023. [Link](#).

⁸ United States Senate, Finance Committee Amendment List, Executive Session, Hassan Amendment #2: Parity in Medicare Payments for Hospital Outpatient Department Services Furnished Off-Campus, November 8, 2023. [Link](#).

⁹ United States of Care, State Laws to Promote Fair Billing, November, 2023. [Link](#).